SUZUKA

5

MATURE CONTENT

KOUJI SEO

SUZUKA

5

Kouji Seo

TRANSLATED AND ADAPTED BY
David Ury

LETTERED BY
North Market Street Graphics

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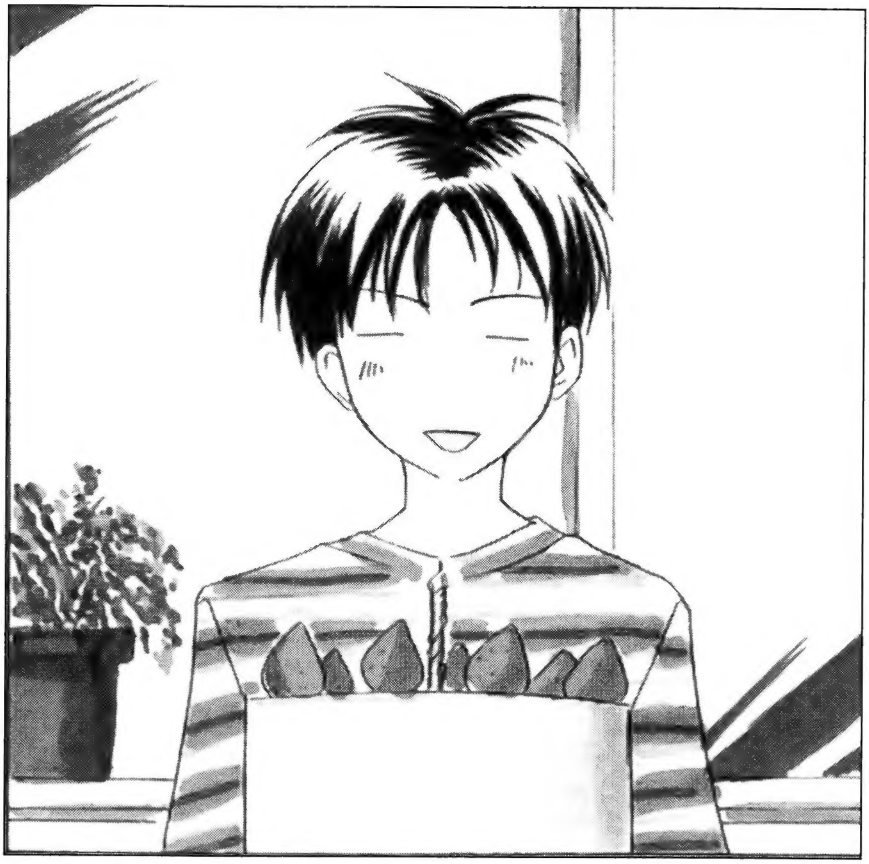
Contents

A Note From the Author iv
Honorifics Explained v
Suzuka, Volume 5 1
Translation Notes 192

A Note from the Author



IT LOOKS LIKE SUZUKA *IS GOING TO MAKE IT TO ITS ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY, AND IT'S ALL THANKS TO YOU LOYAL READERS. TO CELEBRATE THE OCCASION, I BOUGHT A CAKE AND PUT A SINGLE CANDLE IN IT. I HOPE NEXT YEAR I'LL BE ABLE TO CELEBRATE WITH TWO CANDLES.*

Honorifics Explained

Throughout the Del Rey Manga books, you will find Japanese honorifics left intact in the translations. For those not familiar with how the Japanese use honorifics and, more important, how they differ from American honorifics, we present this brief overview.

Politeness has always been a critical facet of Japanese culture. Ever since the feudal era, when Japan was a highly stratified society, use of honorifics—which can be defined as polite speech that indicates relationship or status—has played an essential role in the Japanese language. When addressing someone in Japanese, an honorific usually takes the form of a suffix attached to one's name (example: "Asuna-san"), is used as a title at the end of one's name, or appears in place of the name itself (example: "Negi-sensei," or simply "Sensei!").

Honorifics can be expressions of respect or endearment. In the context of manga and anime, honorifics give insight into the nature of the relationship between characters. Many English translations leave out these important honorifics and therefore distort the feel of the original Japanese. Because Japanese honorifics contain nuances that English honorifics lack, it is our policy at Del Rey not to translate them. Here, instead, is a guide to some of the honorifics you may encounter in Del Rey Manga.

-san: This is the most common honorific and is equivalent to Mr., Miss, Ms., or Mrs. It is the all-purpose honorific and can be used in any situation where politeness is required.

-sama: This is one level higher than "-san." It is used to confer great respect.

-dono: This comes from the word "tono," which means "lord." It is an even higher level than "-sama" and confers utmost respect.

-kun: This suffix is used at the end of boys' names to express familiarity or endearment. It is also sometimes used by men among friends, or when addressing someone younger or of a lower station.

-chan: This is used to express endearment, mostly toward girls. It is also used for little boys, pets, and even among lovers. It gives a sense of childish cuteness.

Bozu: This is an informal way to refer to a boy, similar to the English terms "kid" and "squirt."

Sempai/ Senpai: This title suggests that the addressee is one's senior in a group or organization. It is most often used in a school setting, where underclassmen refer to their upperclassmen as "sempai." It can also be used in the workplace, such as when a newer employee addresses an employee who has seniority in the company.

Kohai: This is the opposite of "sempai" and is used toward underclassmen in school or newcomers in the workplace. It connotes that the addressee is of a lower station.

Sensei: Literally meaning "one who has come before," this title is used for teachers, doctors, or masters of any profession or art.

[blank]: This is usually forgotten in these lists, but it is perhaps the most significant difference between Japanese and English. The lack of honorific means that the speaker has permission to address the person in a very intimate way. Usually, only family, spouses, or very close friends have this kind of permission. Known as *yobisute,* it can be gratifying when someone who has earned the intimacy starts to call one by one's name without an honorific. But when that intimacy hasn't been earned, it can be very insulting.

SUZUKA

5

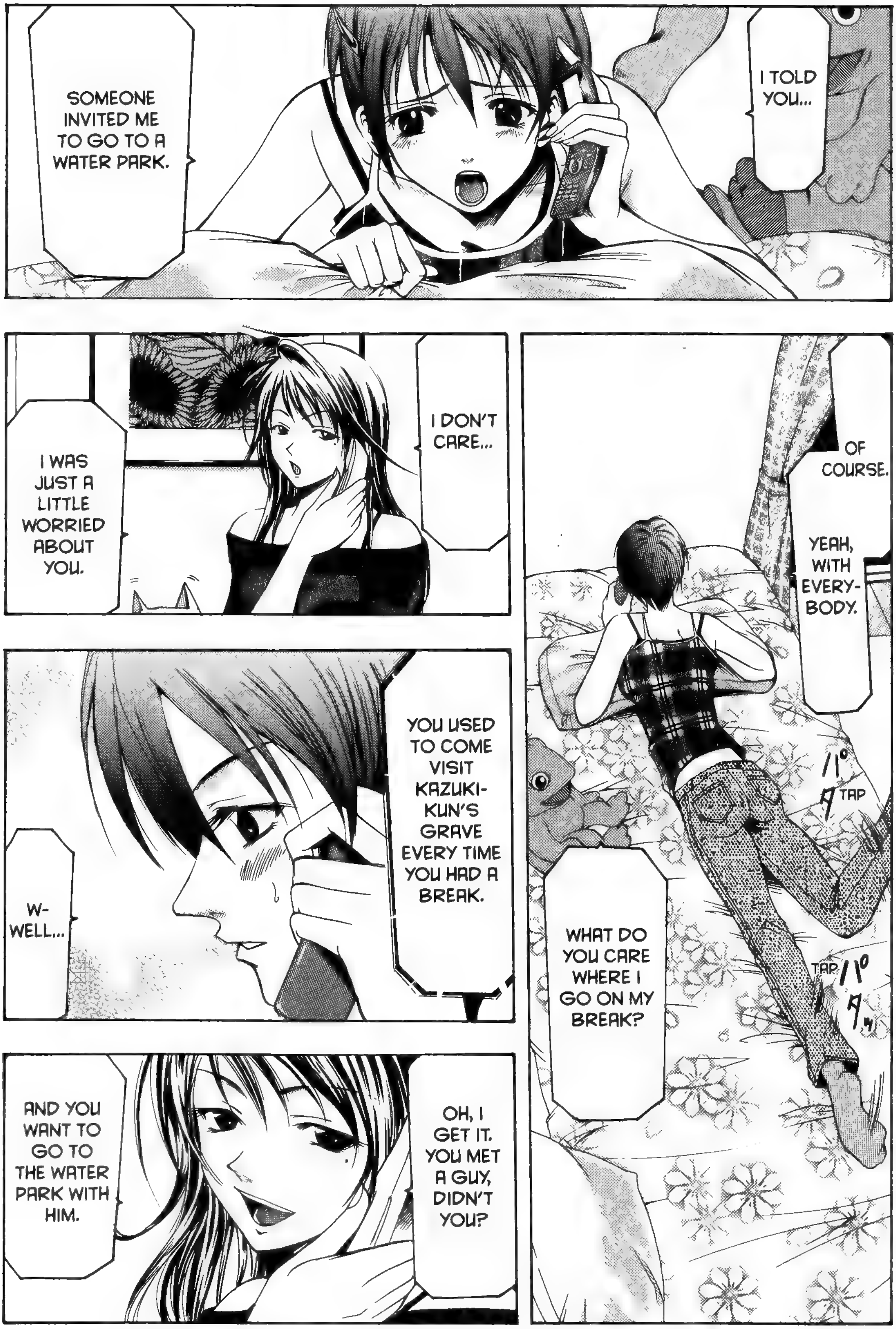
Kouji Seo

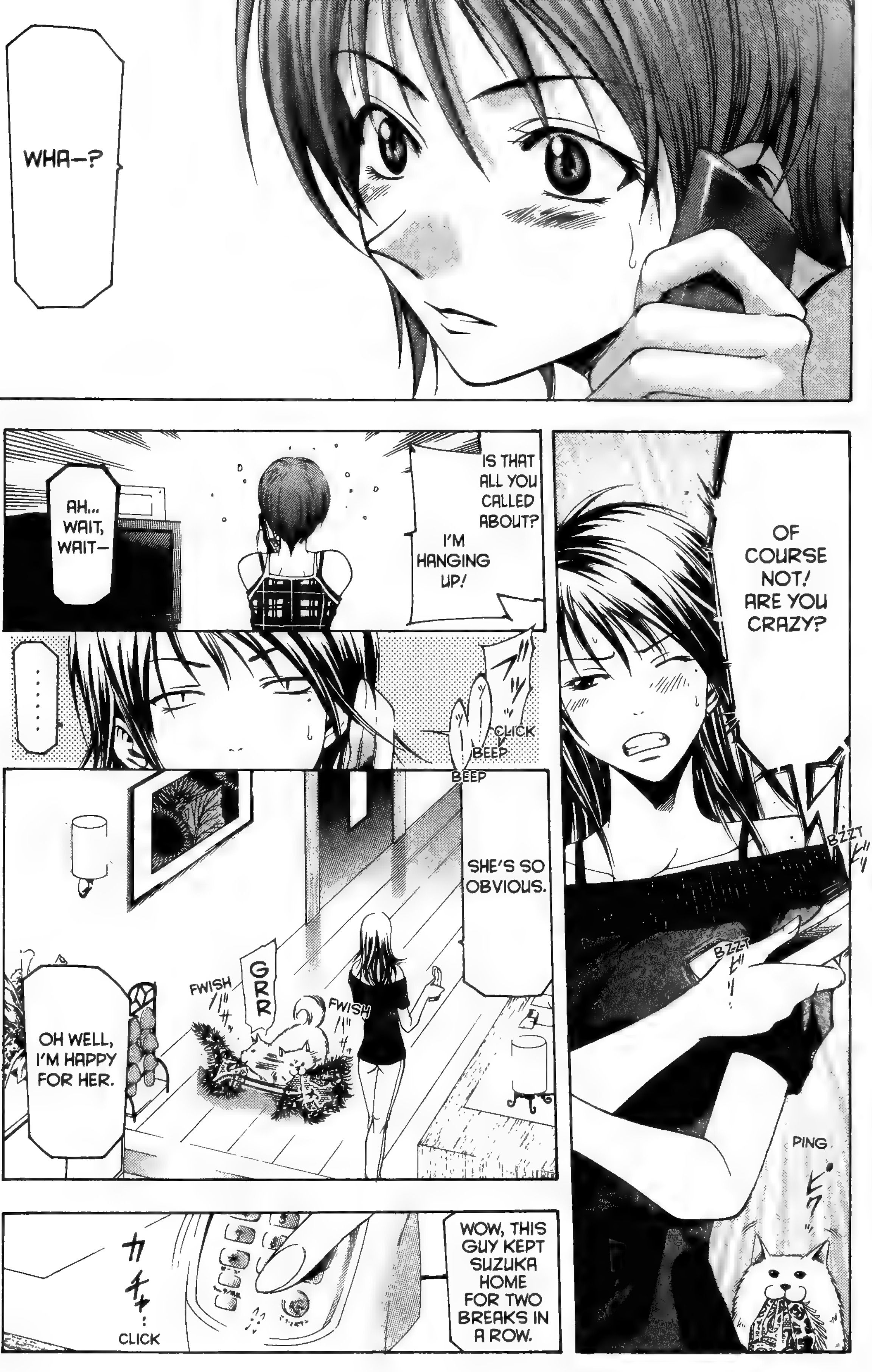
CONTENTS

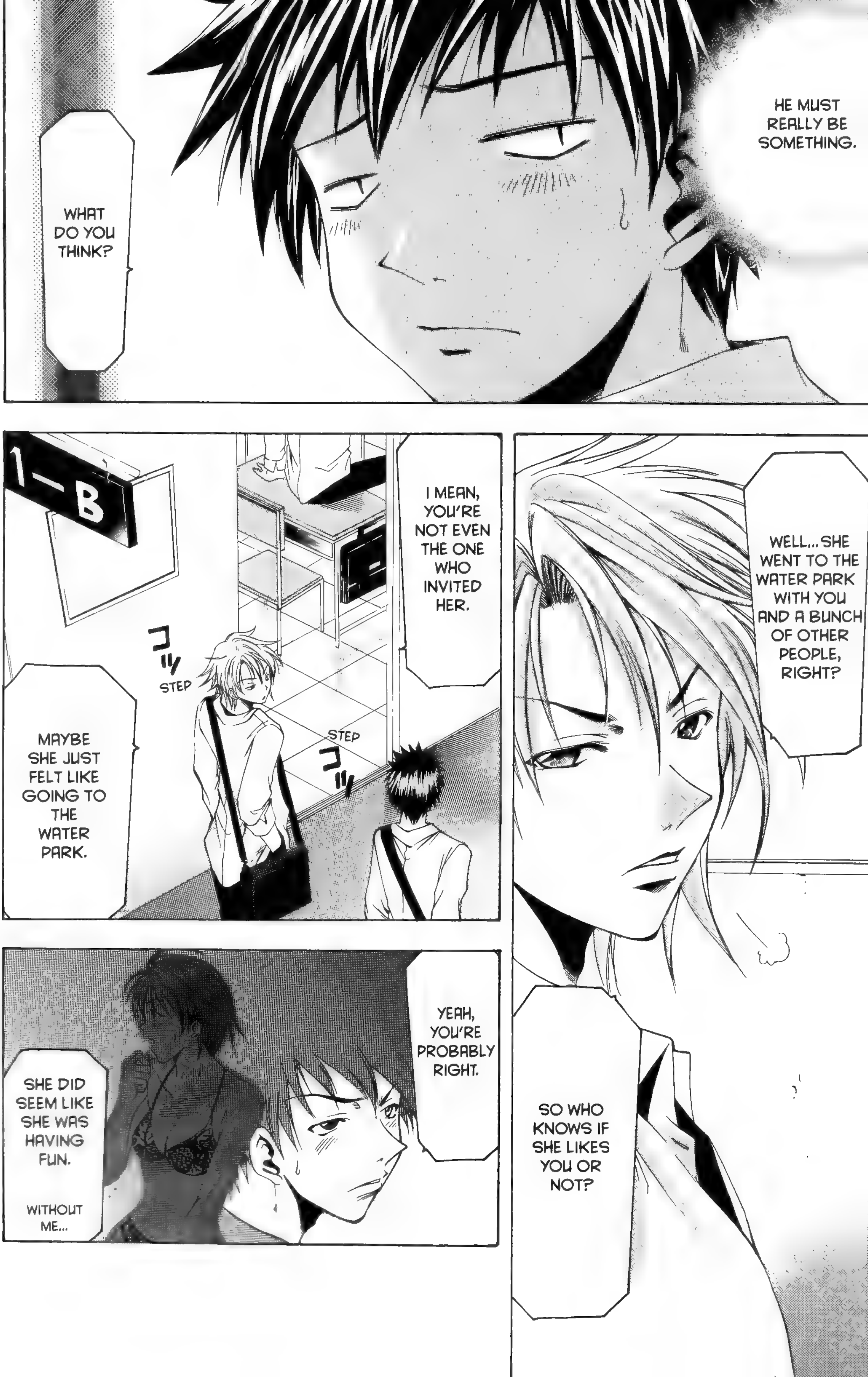
#32 War..3
#33 Lips..23
#34 Tremors..53
#35 Goals..73
#36 Exposed..93
#37 Celebration..113
#38 Lightning..133
#39 Two..153
#40 Home..173

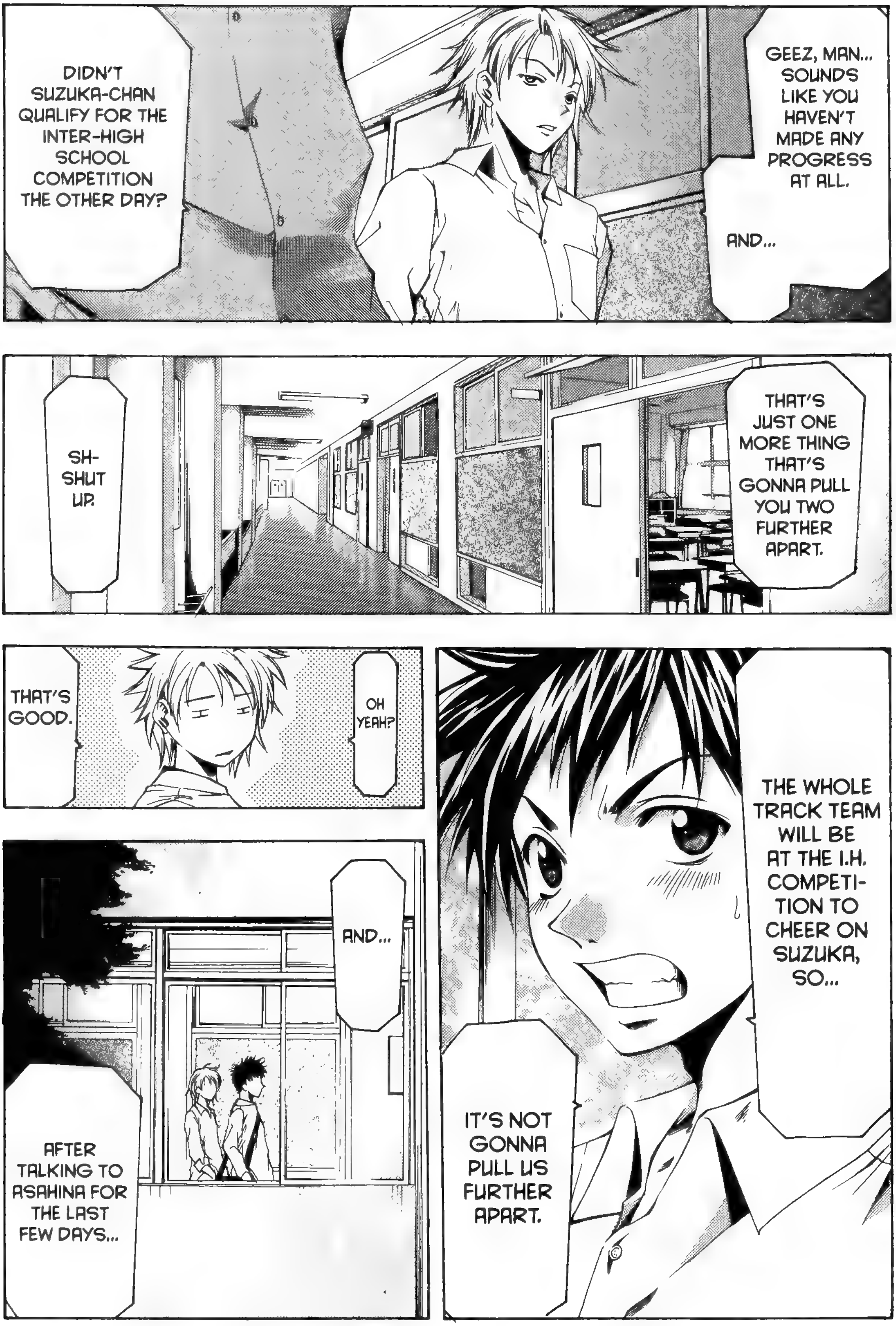
SUZUKA

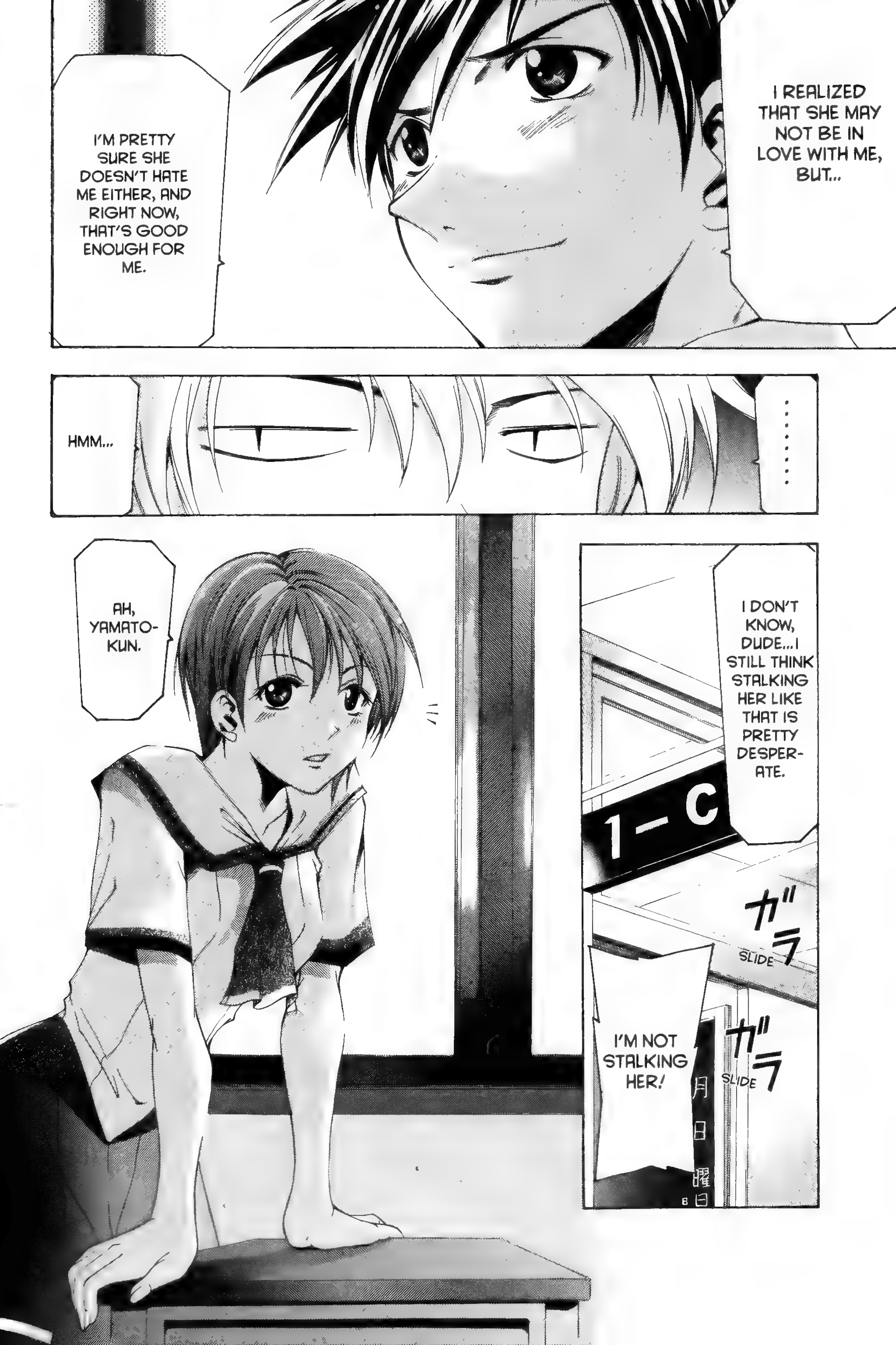
#32 WAR

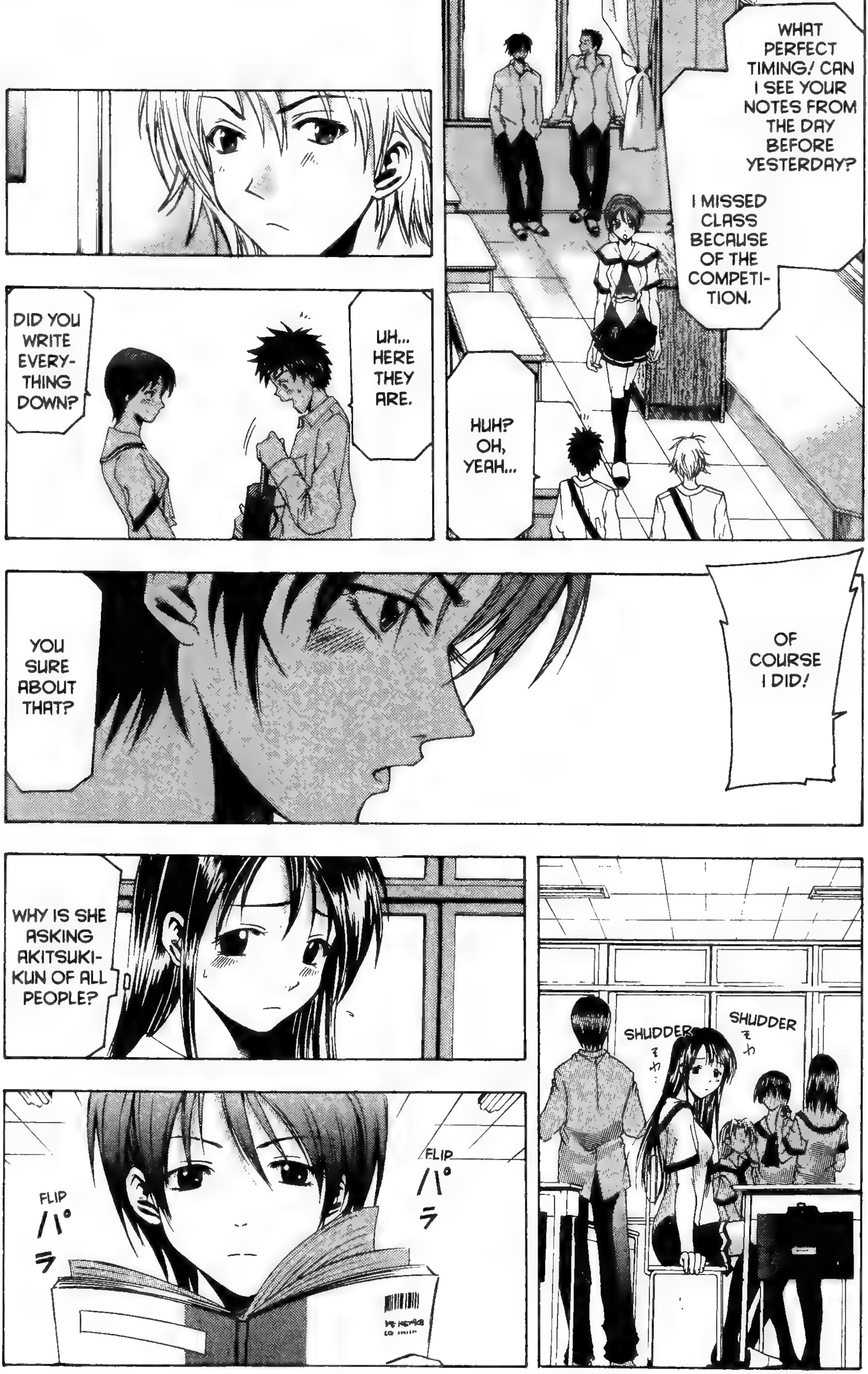

I TOLD YOU...
SOMEONE INVITED ME TO GO TO A WATER PARK.
OF COURSE.
YEAH, WITH EVERYBODY.
I DON'T CARE...
I WAS JUST A LITTLE WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
TAP
YOU USED TO COME VISIT KAZUKI-KUN'S GRAVE EVERY TIME YOU HAD A BREAK.
W-WELL...
WHAT DO YOU CARE WHERE I GO ON MY BREAK?
TAP
OH, I GET IT. YOU MET A GUY, DIDN'T YOU?
AND YOU WANT TO GO TO THE WATER PARK WITH HIM.

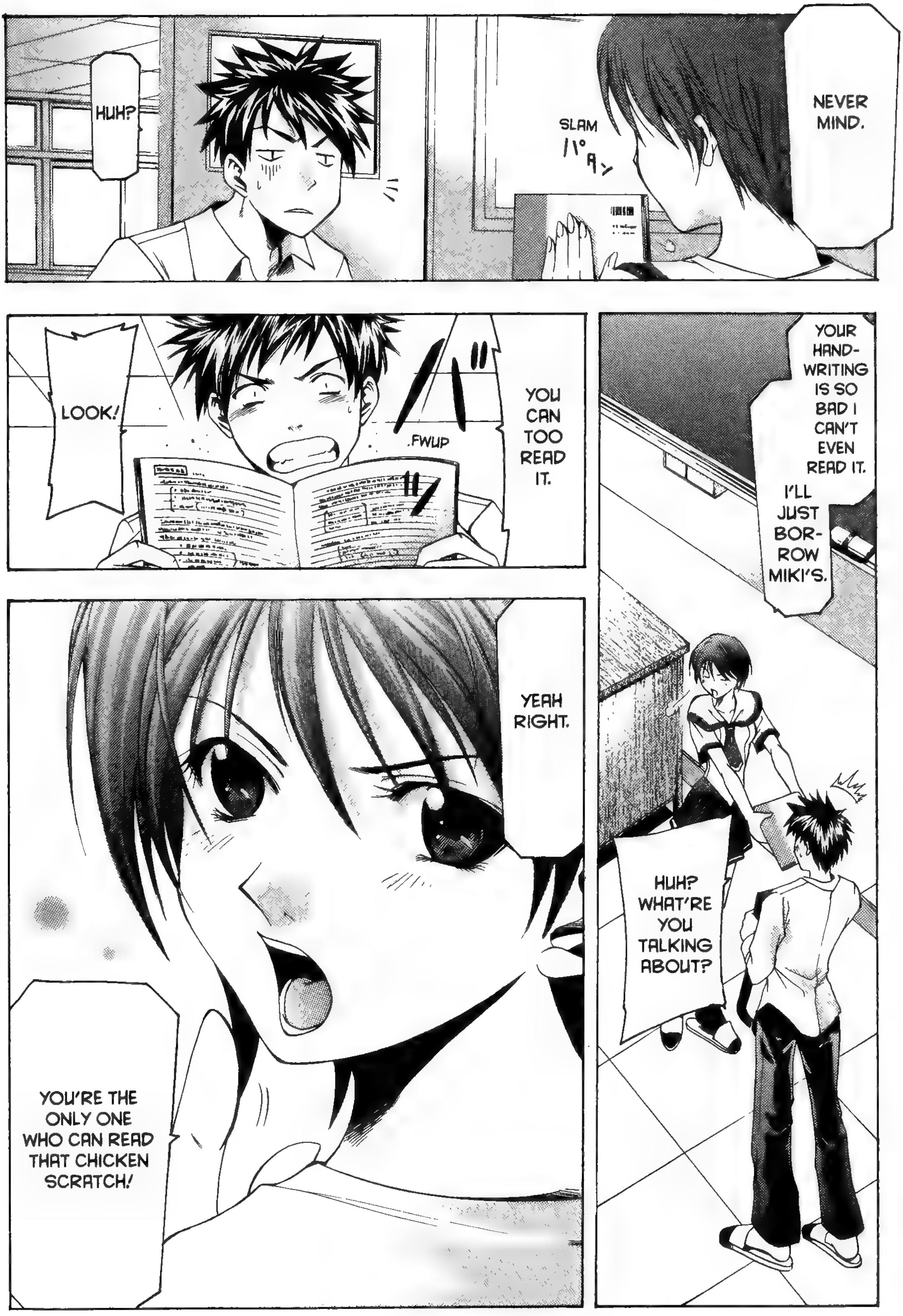

WHA—?
OF COURSE NOT! ARE YOU CRAZY?
IS THAT ALL YOU CALLED ABOUT?
I'M HANGING UP!
AH... WAIT, WAIT—
......
CLICK
BEEP
BEEP
BZZT
BZZT
PING
ビク
SHE'S SO OBVIOUS.
FWISH
GRR
FWISH
OH WELL, I'M HAPPY FOR HER.
WOW, THIS GUY KEPT SUZUKA HOME FOR TWO BREAKS IN A ROW.
カチャ
CLICK

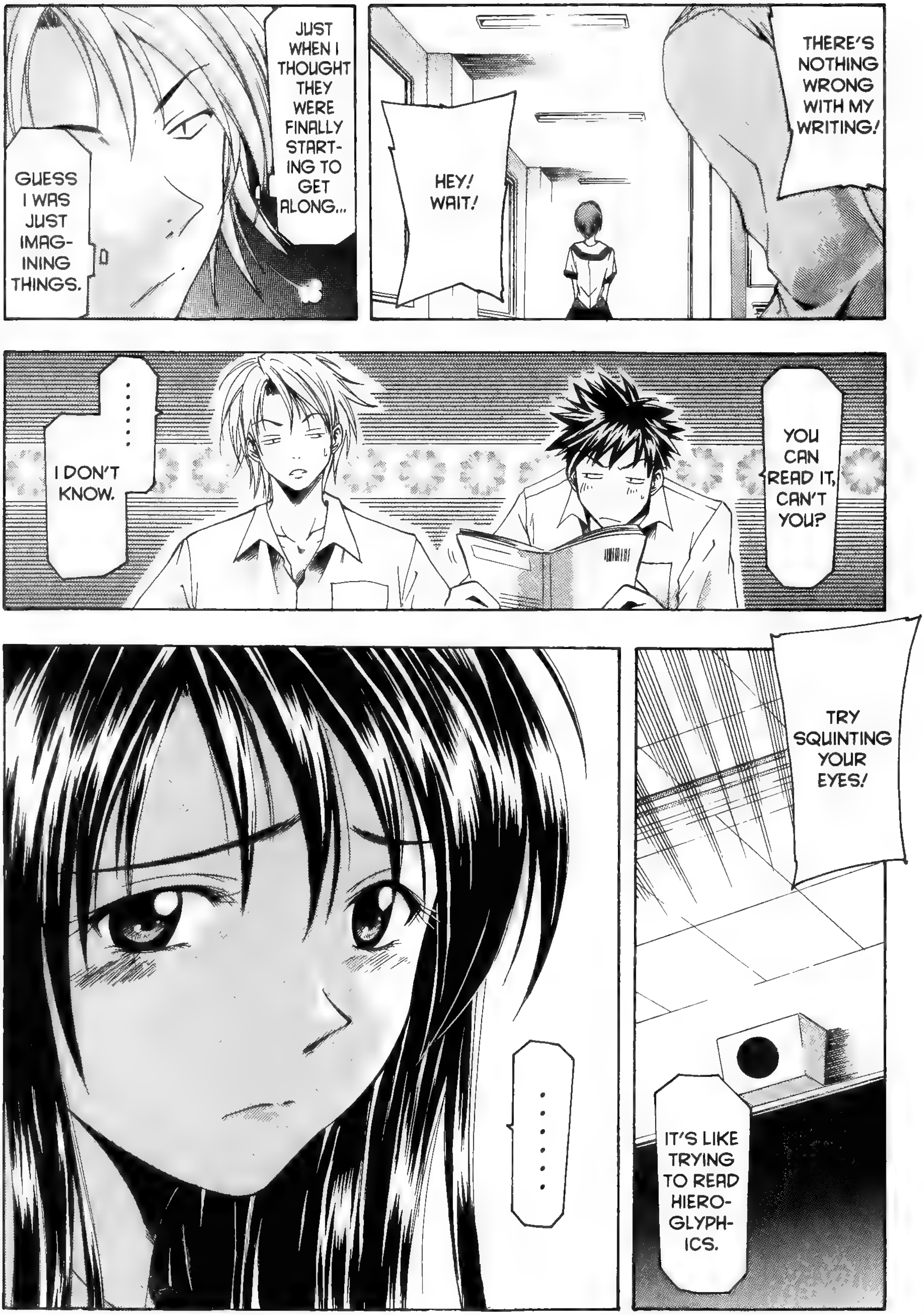

HE MUST REALLY BE SOMETHING.
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
WELL... SHE WENT TO THE WATER PARK WITH YOU AND A BUNCH OF OTHER PEOPLE, RIGHT?
SO WHO KNOWS IF SHE LIKES YOU OR NOT?
I MEAN, YOU'RE NOT EVEN THE ONE WHO INVITED HER.
1-B
コツ STEP
コツ STEP
MAYBE SHE JUST FELT LIKE GOING TO THE WATER PARK.
YEAH, YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT.
SHE DID SEEM LIKE SHE WAS HAVING FUN.
WITHOUT ME...

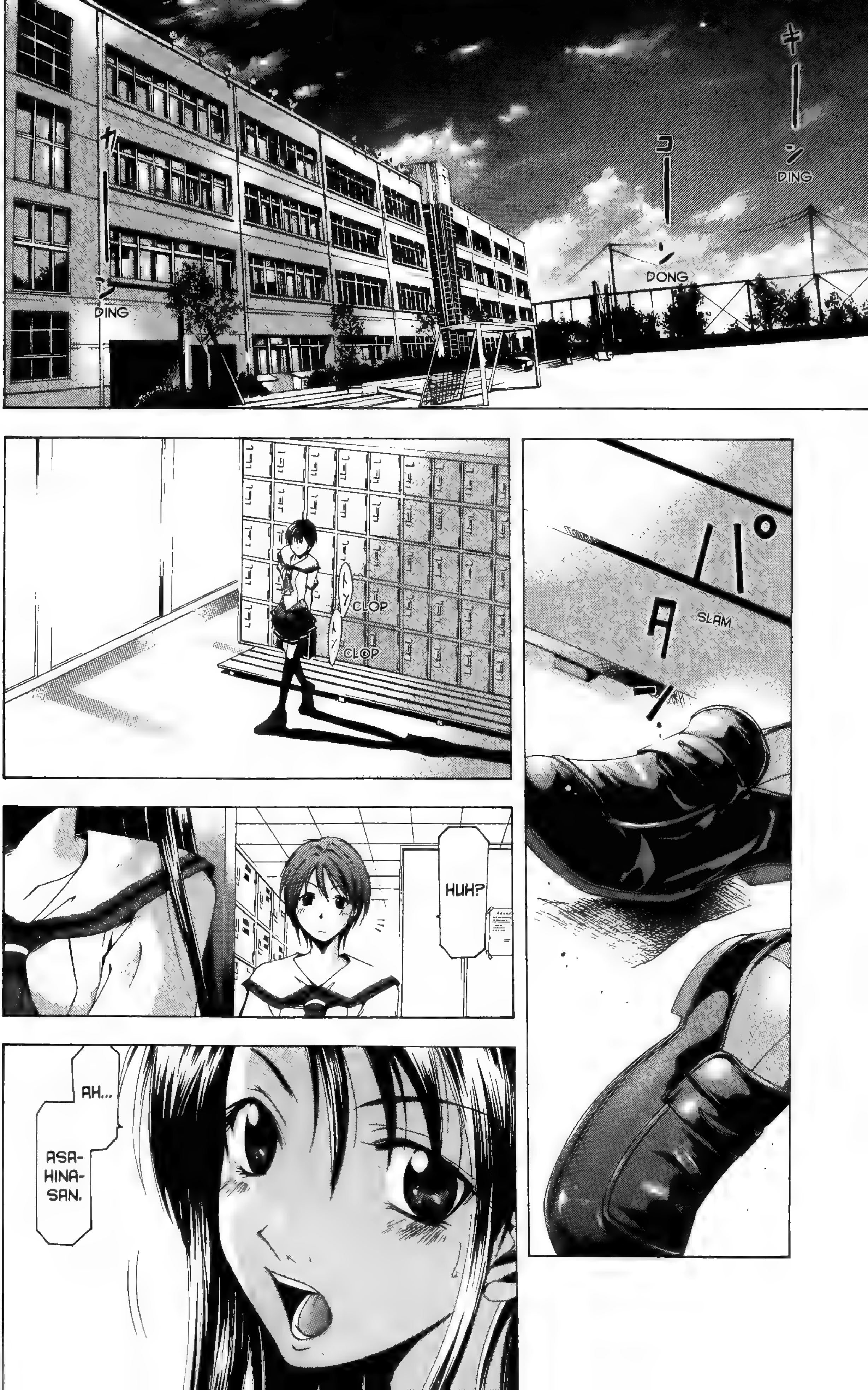

GEEZ, MAN... SOUNDS LIKE YOU HAVEN'T MADE ANY PROGRESS AT ALL.
AND...
DIDN'T SUZUKA-CHAN QUALIFY FOR THE INTER-HIGH SCHOOL COMPETITION THE OTHER DAY?
THAT'S JUST ONE MORE THING THAT'S GONNA PULL YOU TWO FURTHER APART.
SH-SHUT UP.
THE WHOLE TRACK TEAM WILL BE AT THE I.H. COMPETITION TO CHEER ON SUZUKA, SO...
IT'S NOT GONNA PULL US FURTHER APART.
OH YEAH?
THAT'S GOOD.
AND...
AFTER TALKING TO ASAHINA FOR THE LAST FEW DAYS...

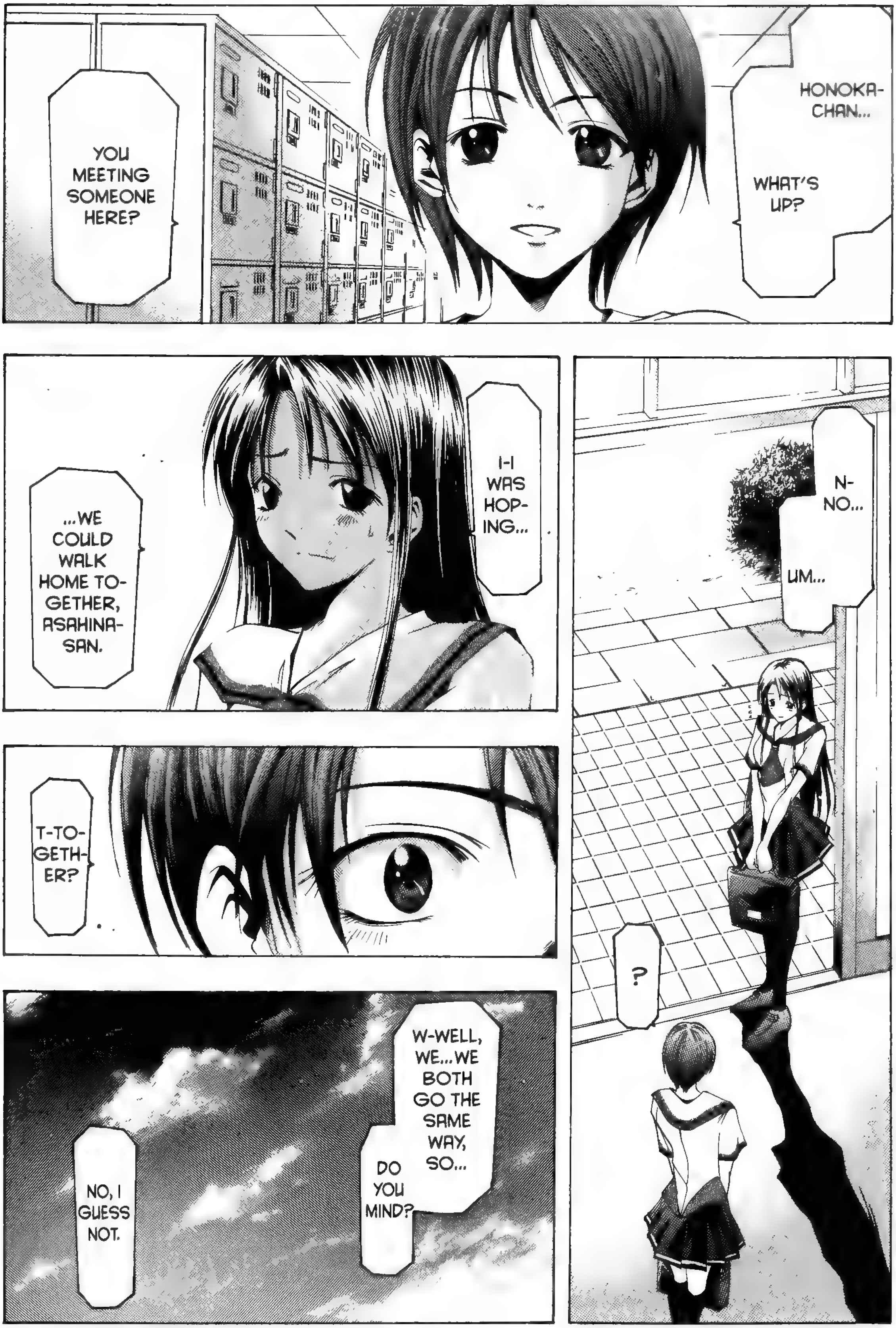

I REALIZED THAT SHE MAY NOT BE IN LOVE WITH ME, BUT...
I'M PRETTY SURE SHE DOESN'T HATE ME EITHER, AND RIGHT NOW, THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME.
....
HMM...
I DON'T KNOW, DUDE...I STILL THINK STALKING HER LIKE THAT IS PRETTY DESPERATE.
1-C
ガラ SLIDE
ガラ SLIDE
I'M NOT STALKING HER!
月 日 曜日
AH, YAMATO-KUN.

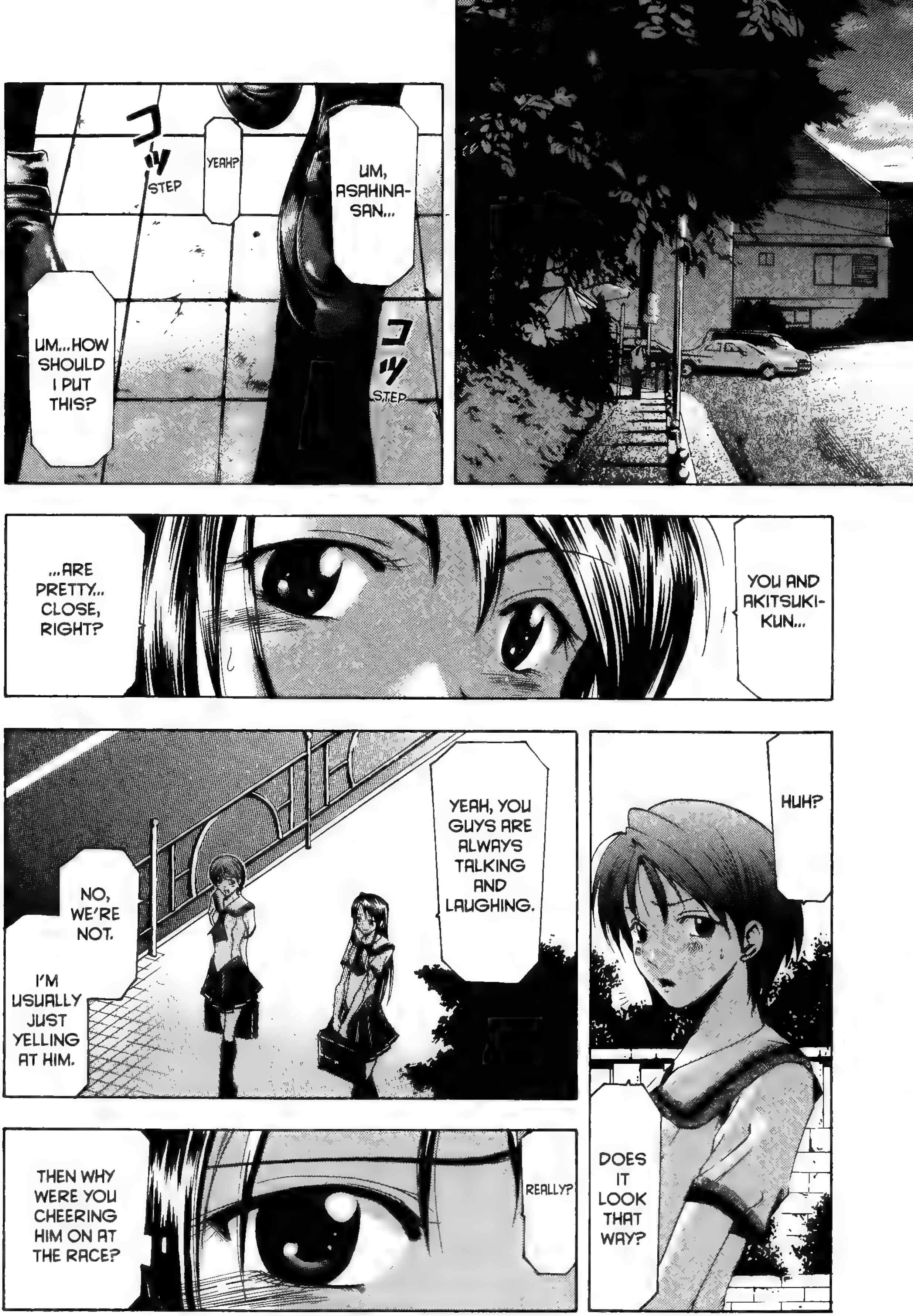

WHAT PERFECT TIMING! CAN I SEE YOUR NOTES FROM THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY?
I MISSED CLASS BECAUSE OF THE COMPETITION.
HUH? OH, YEAH...
UH... HERE THEY ARE.
DID YOU WRITE EVERYTHING DOWN?
OF COURSE I DID!
YOU SURE ABOUT THAT?
SHUDDER ぞわ
SHUDDER ぞわ…
WHY IS SHE ASKING AKITSUKI-KUN OF ALL PEOPLE?
FLIP パラ
FLIP パラ

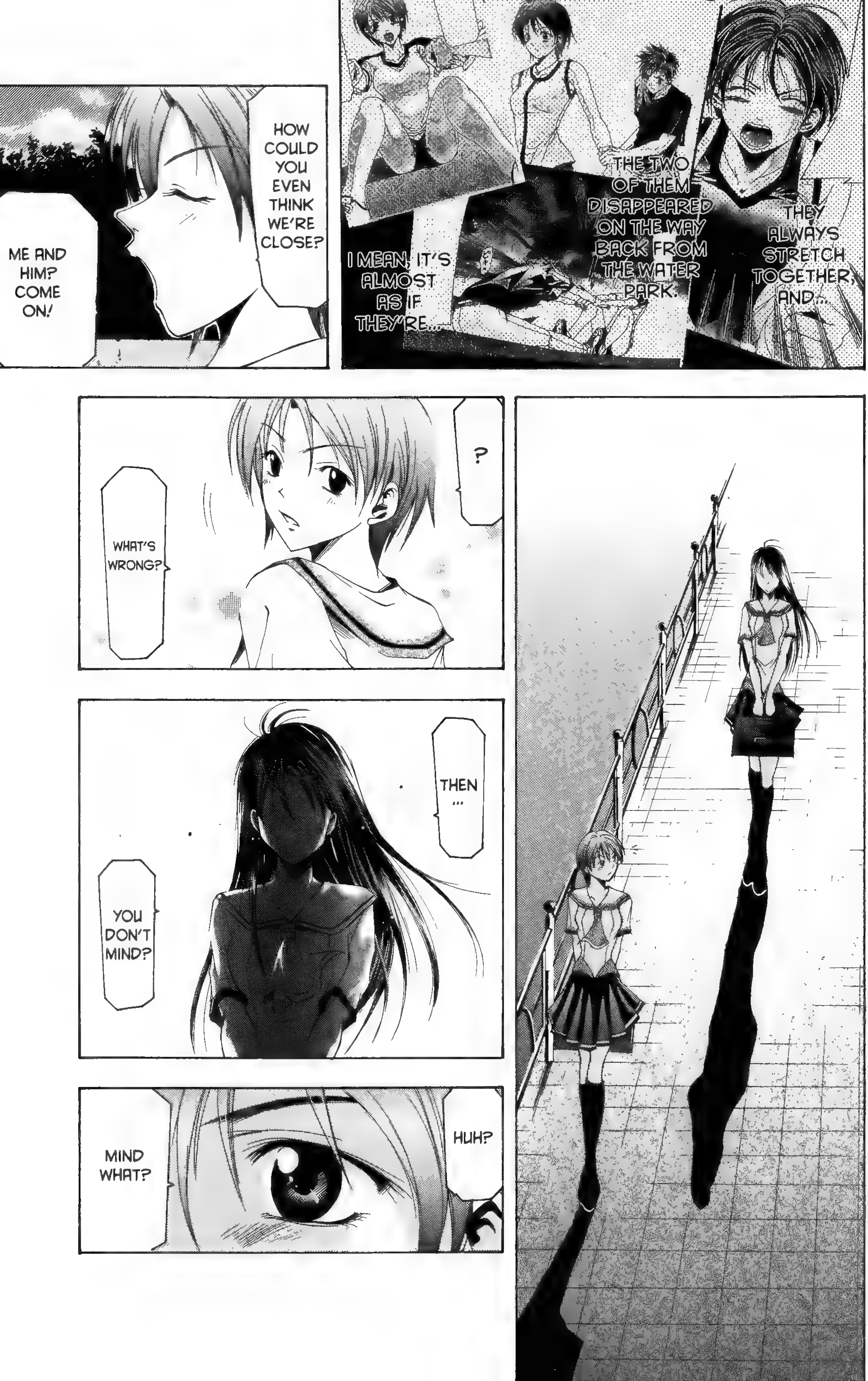

NEVER MIND.
SLAM
パタン
HUH?
YOUR HANDWRITING IS SO BAD I CAN'T EVEN READ IT.
I'LL JUST BORROW MIKI'S.
HUH? WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
YOU CAN TOO READ IT.
.FWUP
LOOK!
YEAH RIGHT.
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN READ THAT CHICKEN SCRATCH!

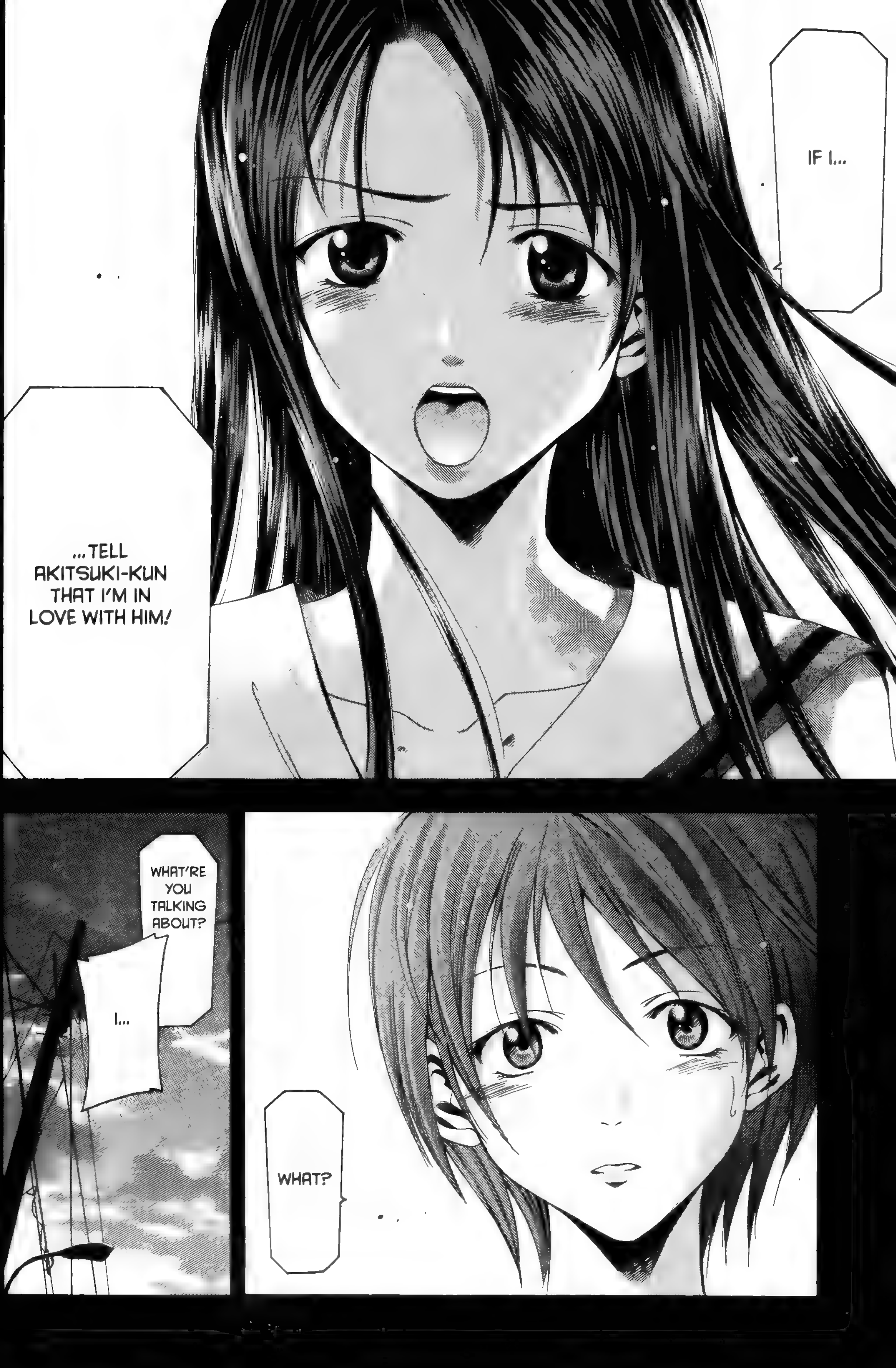

THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH MY WRITING!
HEY! WAIT!
JUST WHEN I THOUGHT THEY WERE FINALLY STARTING TO GET ALONG...
GUESS I WAS JUST IMAGINING THINGS.
YOU CAN READ IT, CAN'T YOU?
.....
I DON'T KNOW.
TRY SQUINTING YOUR EYES!
IT'S LIKE TRYING TO READ HIEROGLYPHICS.
....

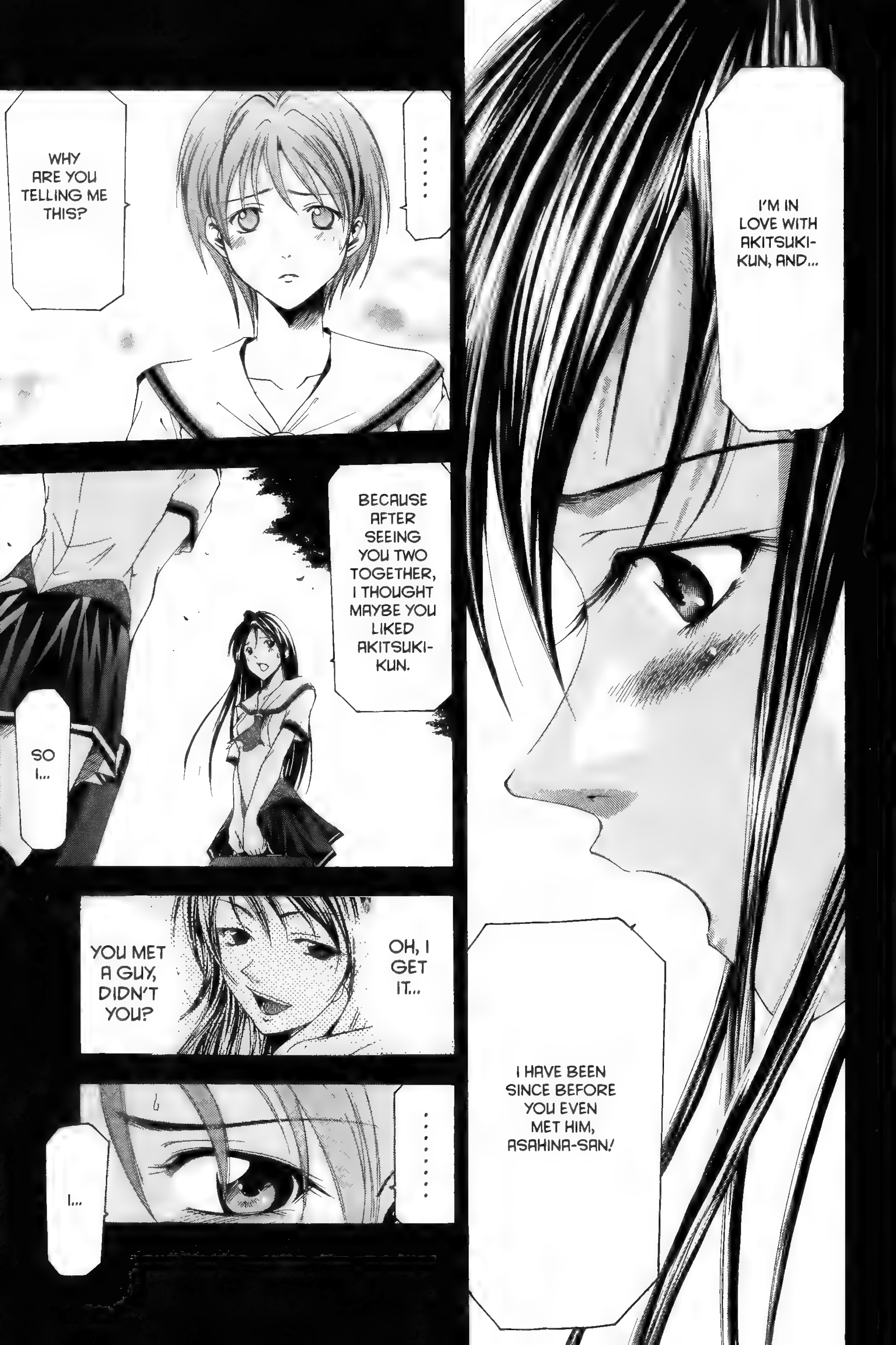

キーン
DING
コーン
DONG
カーン
DING
パタン
SLAM
トン
CLOP
トン
CLOP
HUH?
AH...
ASA-HINA-SAN.

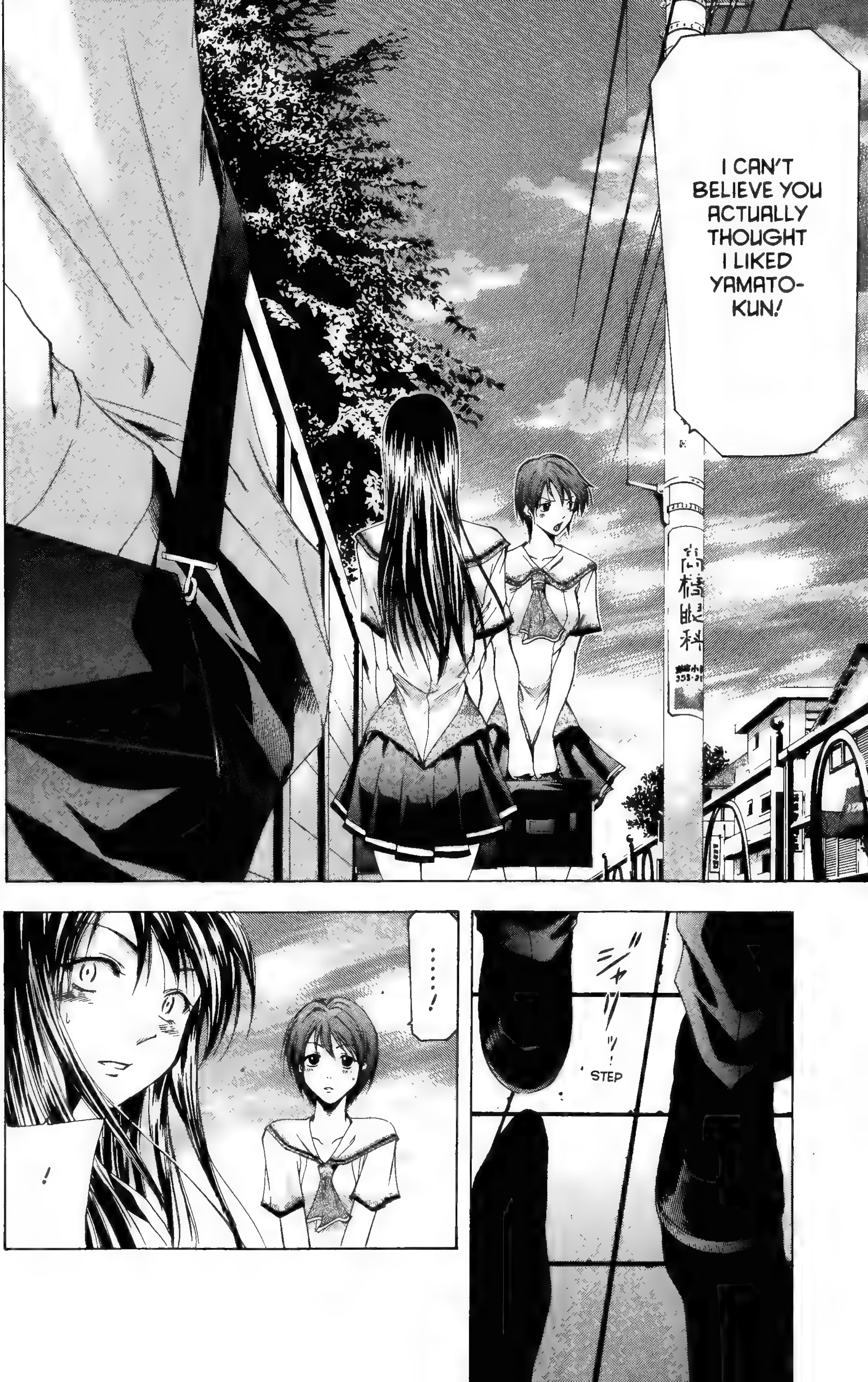

HONOKA-CHAN... WHAT'S UP?
YOU MEETING SOMEONE HERE?
N-NO... UM...
?
I-I WAS HOPING...
...WE COULD WALK HOME TOGETHER, ASAHINA-SAN.
T-TOGETHER?
W-WELL, WE...WE BOTH GO THE SAME WAY, SO...
DO YOU MIND?
NO, I GUESS NOT.

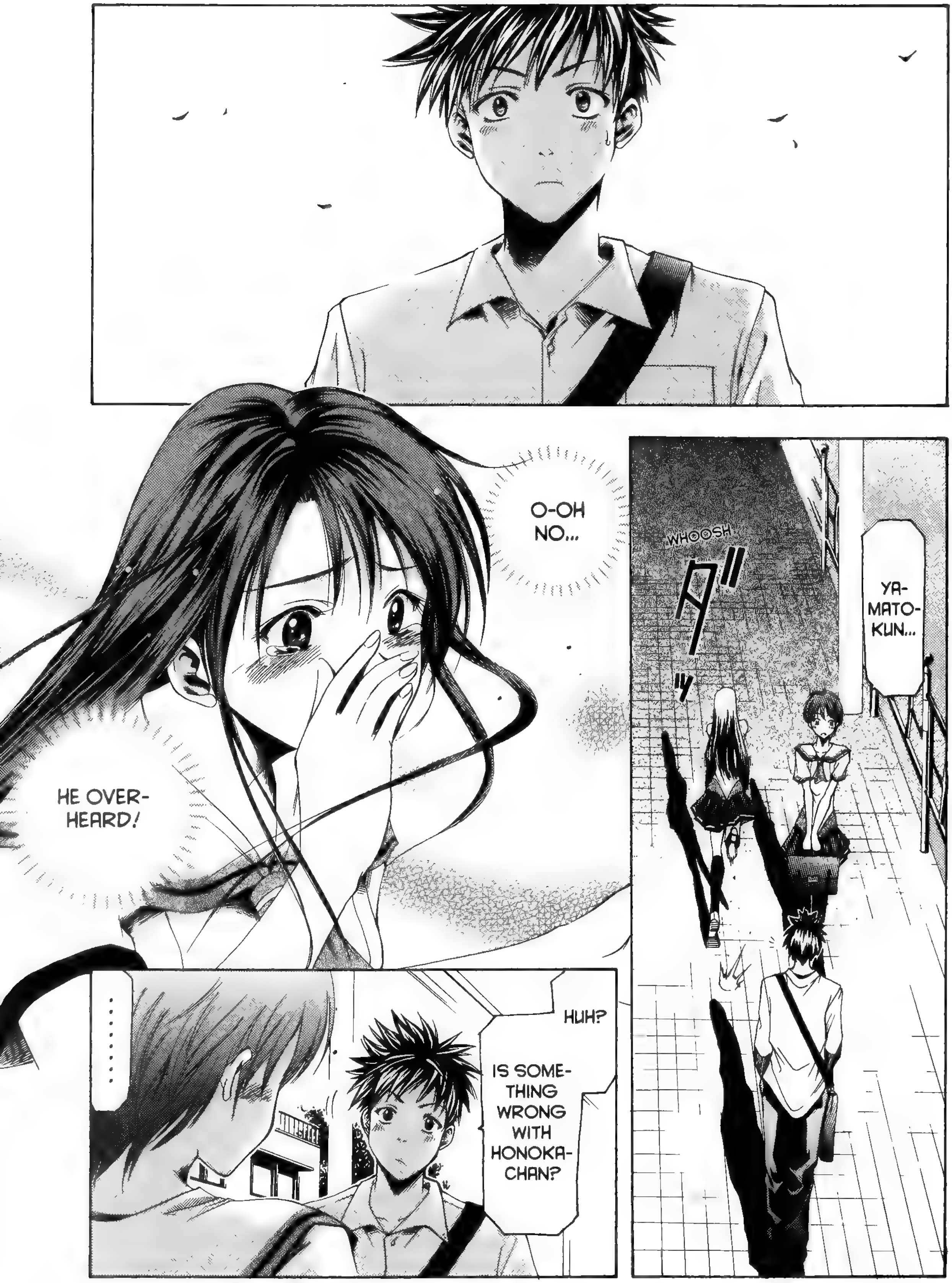

コッ STEP
UM, ASAHINA-SAN...
YEAH?
コッ STEP
UM...HOW SHOULD I PUT THIS?
YOU AND AKITSUKI-KUN...
...ARE PRETTY... CLOSE, RIGHT?
HUH?
DOES IT LOOK THAT WAY?
YEAH, YOU GUYS ARE ALWAYS TALKING AND LAUGHING.
NO, WE'RE NOT.
I'M USUALLY JUST YELLING AT HIM.
REALLY?
THEN WHY WERE YOU CHEERING HIM ON AT THE RACE?

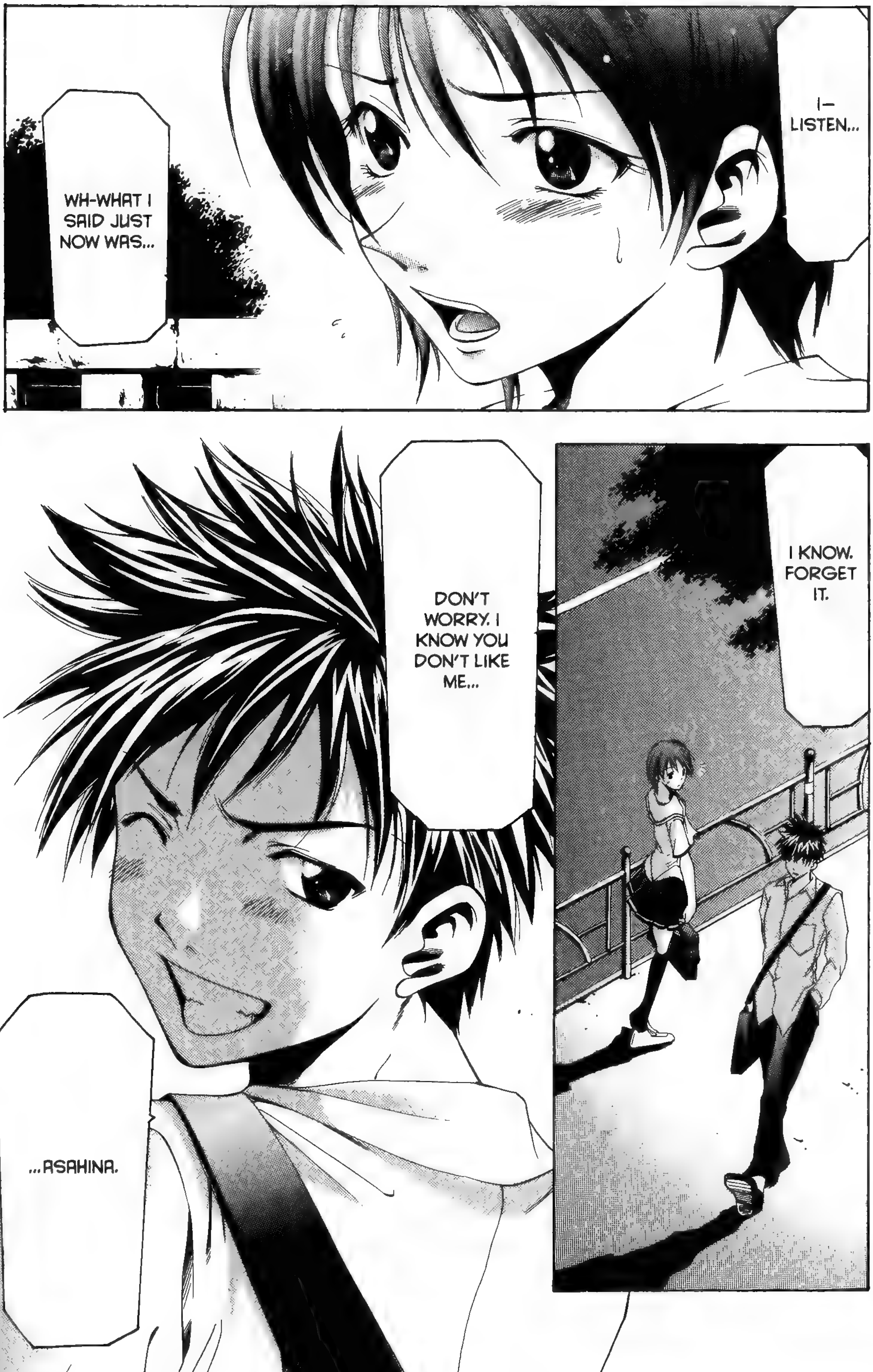

THEY ALWAYS STRETCH TOGETHER, AND...
THE TWO OF THEM DISAPPEARED ON THE WAY BACK FROM THE WATER PARK.
I MEAN, IT'S ALMOST AS IF THEY'RE...
HOW COULD YOU EVEN THINK WE'RE CLOSE?
ME AND HIM? COME ON!
?
WHAT'S WRONG?
THEN ...
YOU DON'T MIND?
HUH?
MIND WHAT?

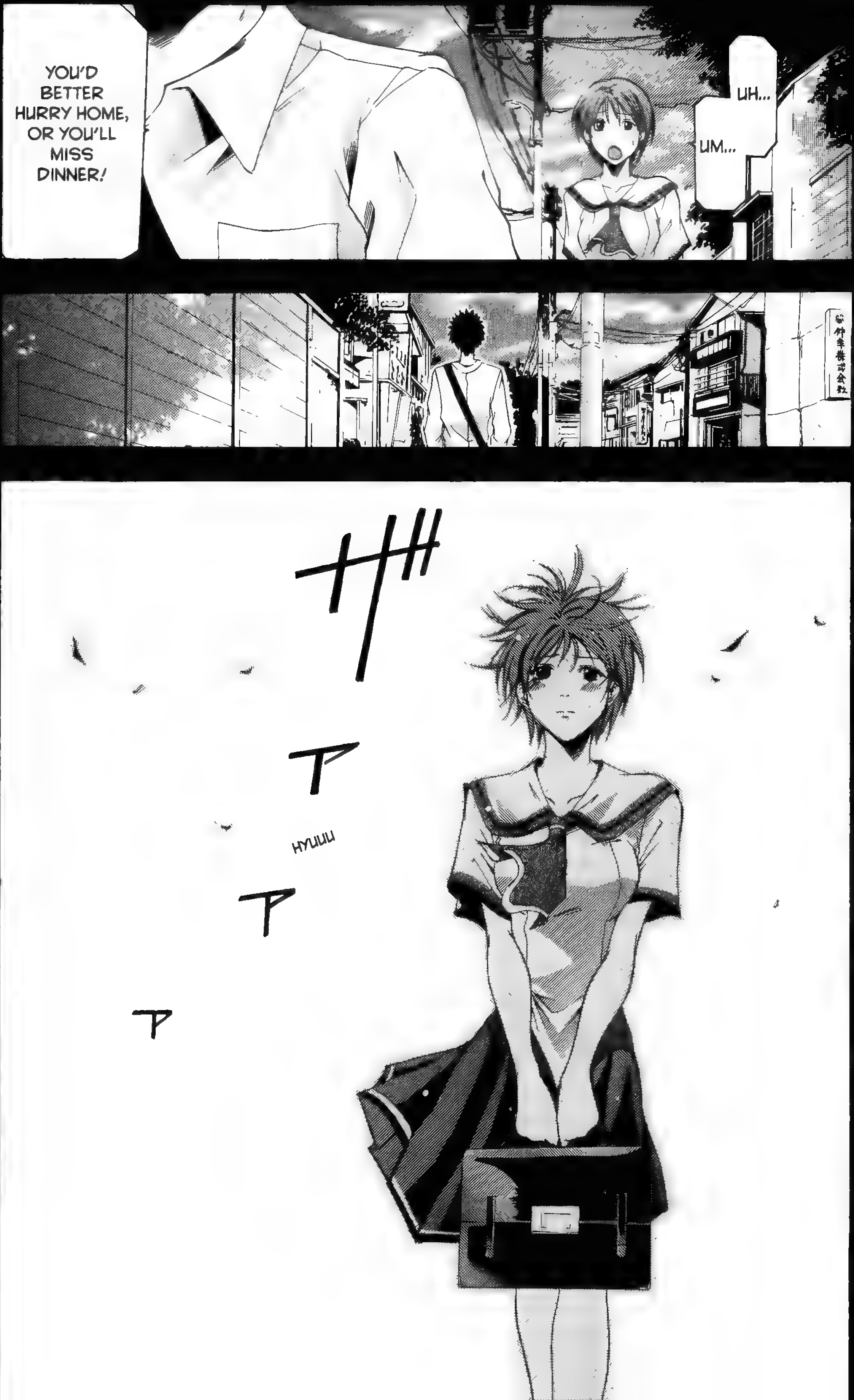

IF I...
...TELL AKITSUKI-KUN THAT I'M IN LOVE WITH HIM!
WHAT?
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
I...


I'M IN LOVE WITH AKITSUKI-KUN, AND...
I HAVE BEEN SINCE BEFORE YOU EVEN MET HIM, ASAHINA-SAN!
......
WHY ARE YOU TELLING ME THIS?
BECAUSE AFTER SEEING YOU TWO TOGETHER, I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU LIKED AKITSUKI-KUN.
SO I...
OH, I GET IT...
YOU MET A GUY, DIDN'T YOU?
......
I...


I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU ACTUALLY THOUGHT I LIKED YAMATO-KUN!
高橋眼科
ジャリッ
STEP
……!
!

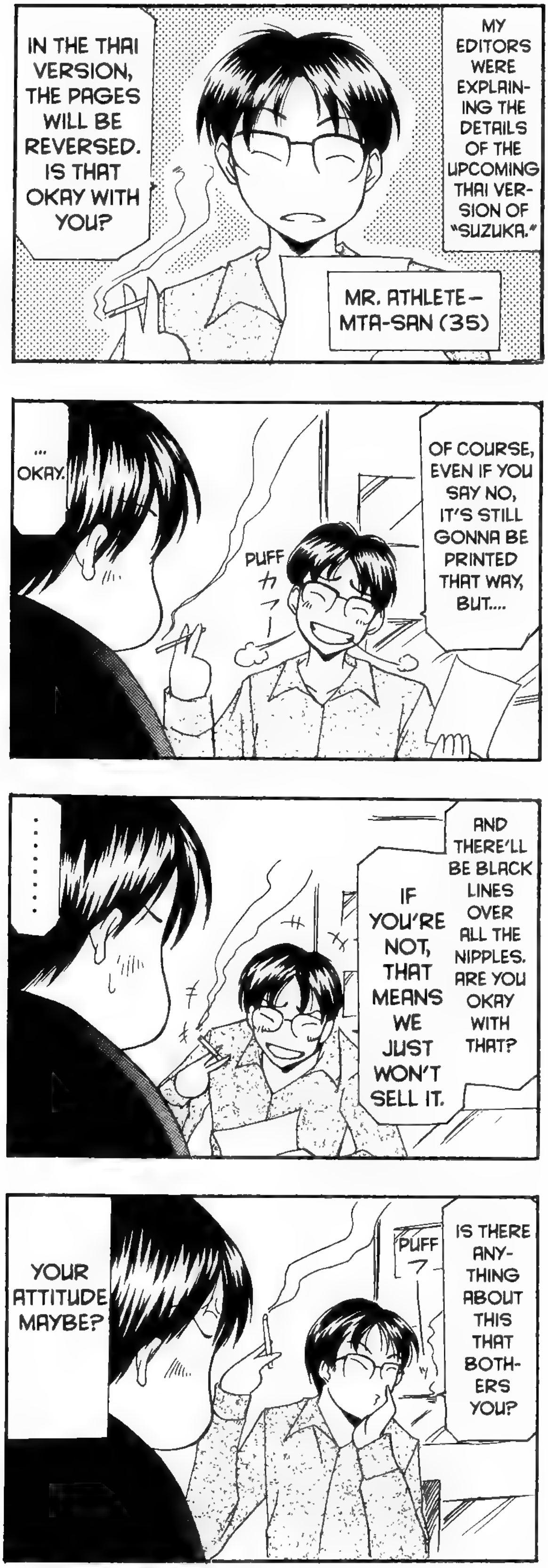

YA-MATO-KUN...
WHOOSH
ダッ
O-OH NO...
HE OVERHEARD!
HUH?
IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH HONOKA-CHAN?
....

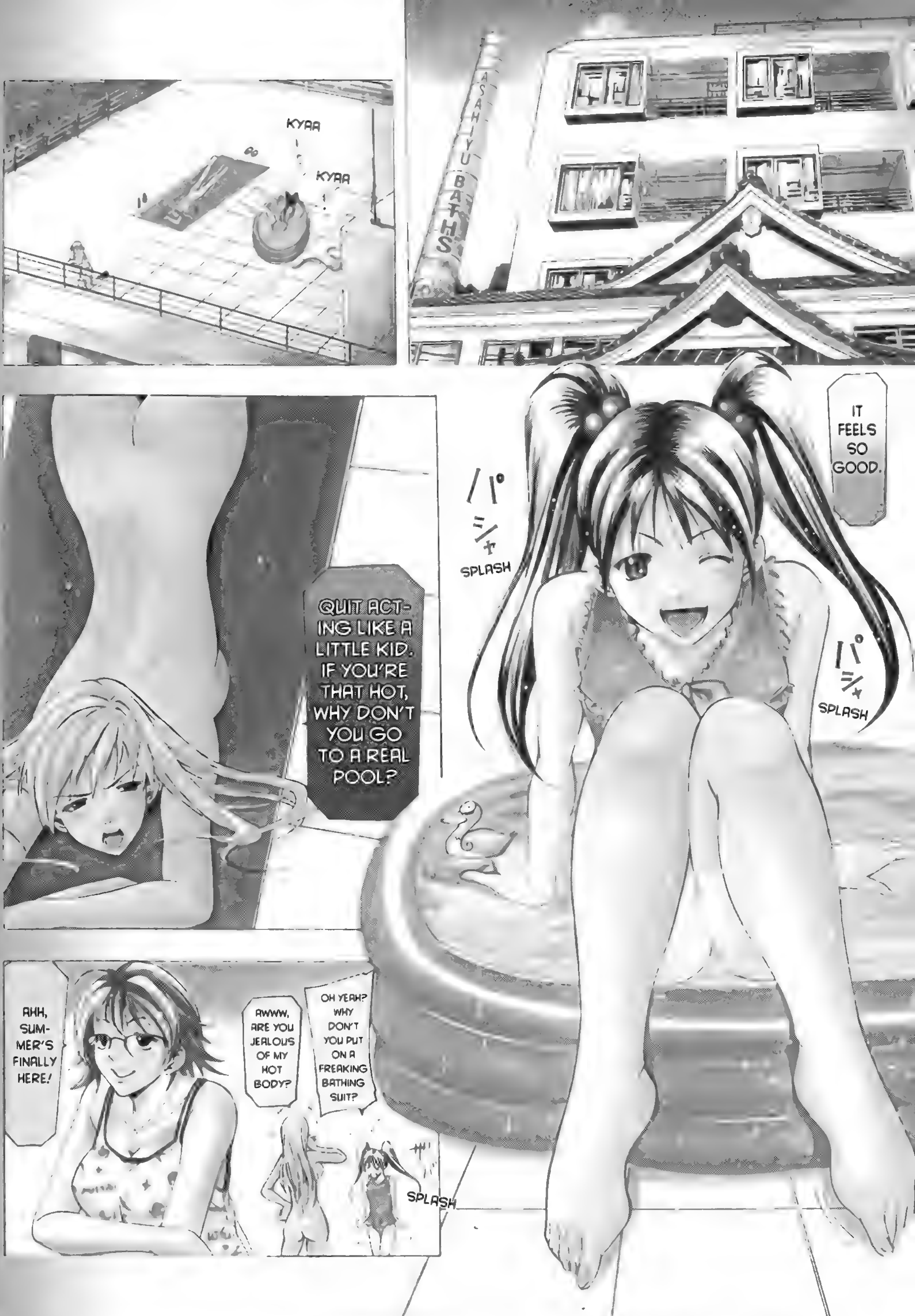

I— LISTEN...
WH-WHAT I SAID JUST NOW WAS...
I KNOW. FORGET IT.
DON'T WORRY. I KNOW YOU DON'T LIKE ME...
...ASAHINA.


UH...
UM...
YOU'D BETTER HURRY HOME, OR YOU'LL MISS DINNER!
ザ
ア
HYUUU
ア
ア

SUZUKA FOUR-PANEL THEATER NUMBER SEVENTEEN

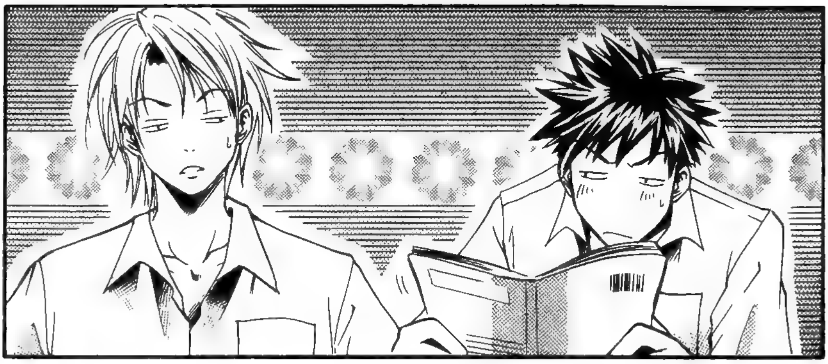
[I DON'T REALLY MIND, BUT...]

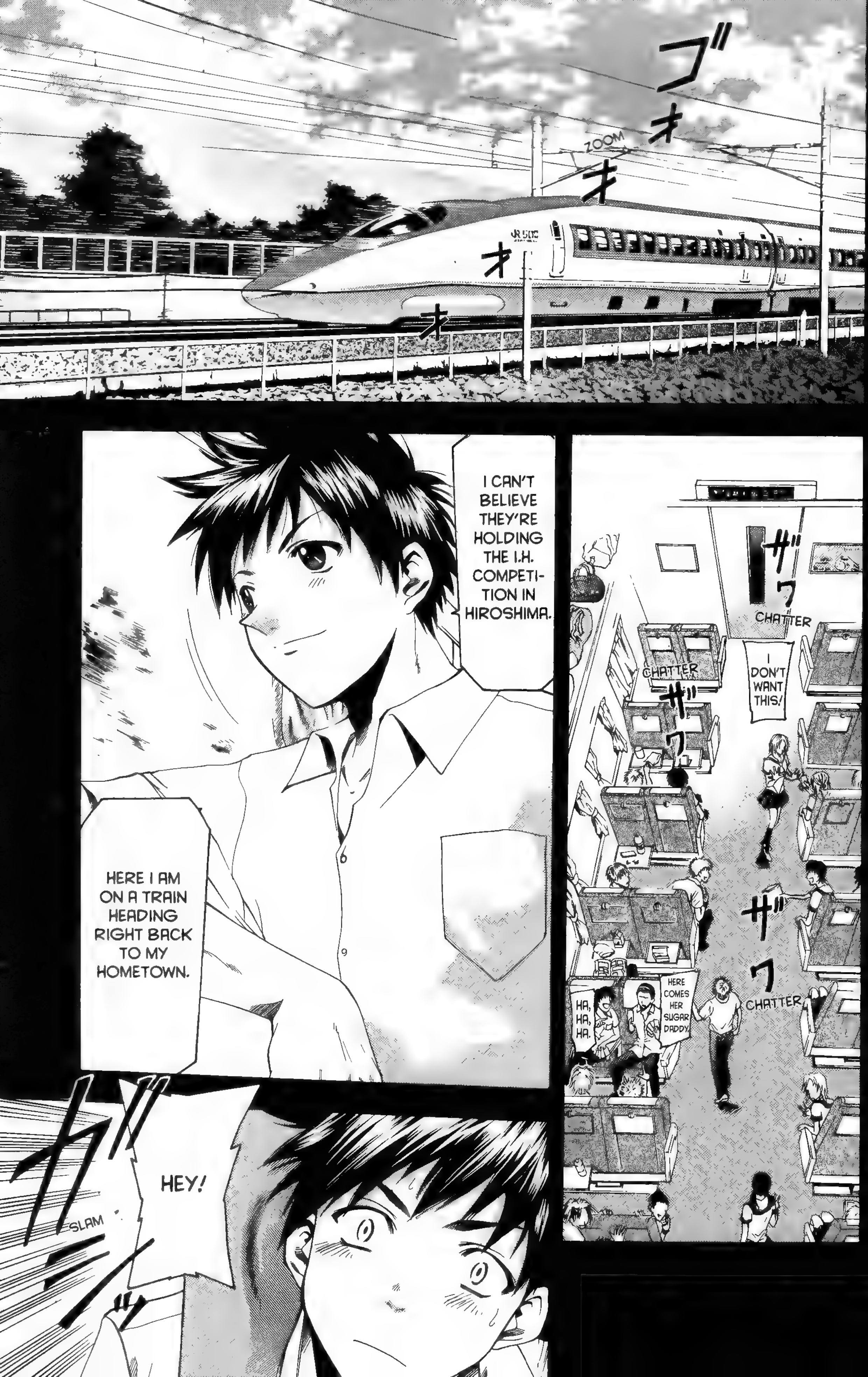

MY EDITORS WERE EXPLAINING THE DETAILS OF THE UPCOMING THAI VERSION OF "SUZUKA."
MR. ATHLETE—MTA-SAN (35)
IN THE THAI VERSION, THE PAGES WILL BE REVERSED. IS THAT OKAY WITH YOU?
OF COURSE, EVEN IF YOU SAY NO, IT'S STILL GONNA BE PRINTED THAT WAY, BUT....
PUFF
カフー
... OKAY.
AND THERE'LL BE BLACK LINES OVER ALL THE NIPPLES. ARE YOU OKAY WITH THAT?
IF YOU'RE NOT, THAT MEANS WE JUST WON'T SELL IT.
....
IS THERE ANYTHING ABOUT THIS THAT BOTHERS YOU?
PUFF
フー
YOUR ATTITUDE MAYBE?

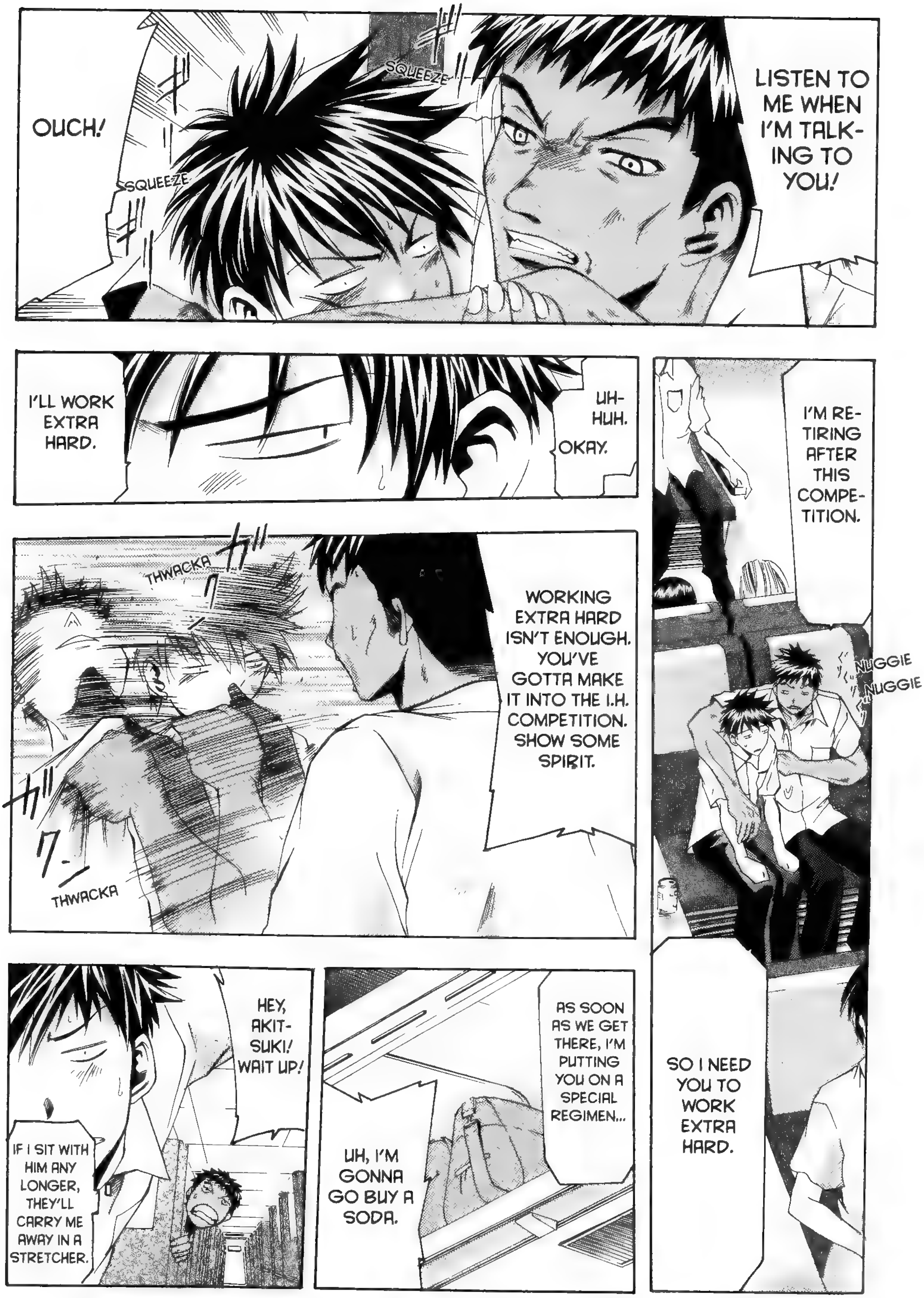

ASAHIYU BATHS
KYAA
KYAA
パシャ
SPLASH
IT FEELS SO GOOD.
パシャ
SPLASH
QUIT ACTING LIKE A LITTLE KID. IF YOU'RE THAT HOT, WHY DON'T YOU GO TO A REAL POOL?
AWWW, ARE YOU JEALOUS OF MY HOT BODY?
OH YEAH? WHY DON'T YOU PUT ON A FREAKING BATHING SUIT?
SPLASH
AHH, SUMMER'S FINALLY HERE!

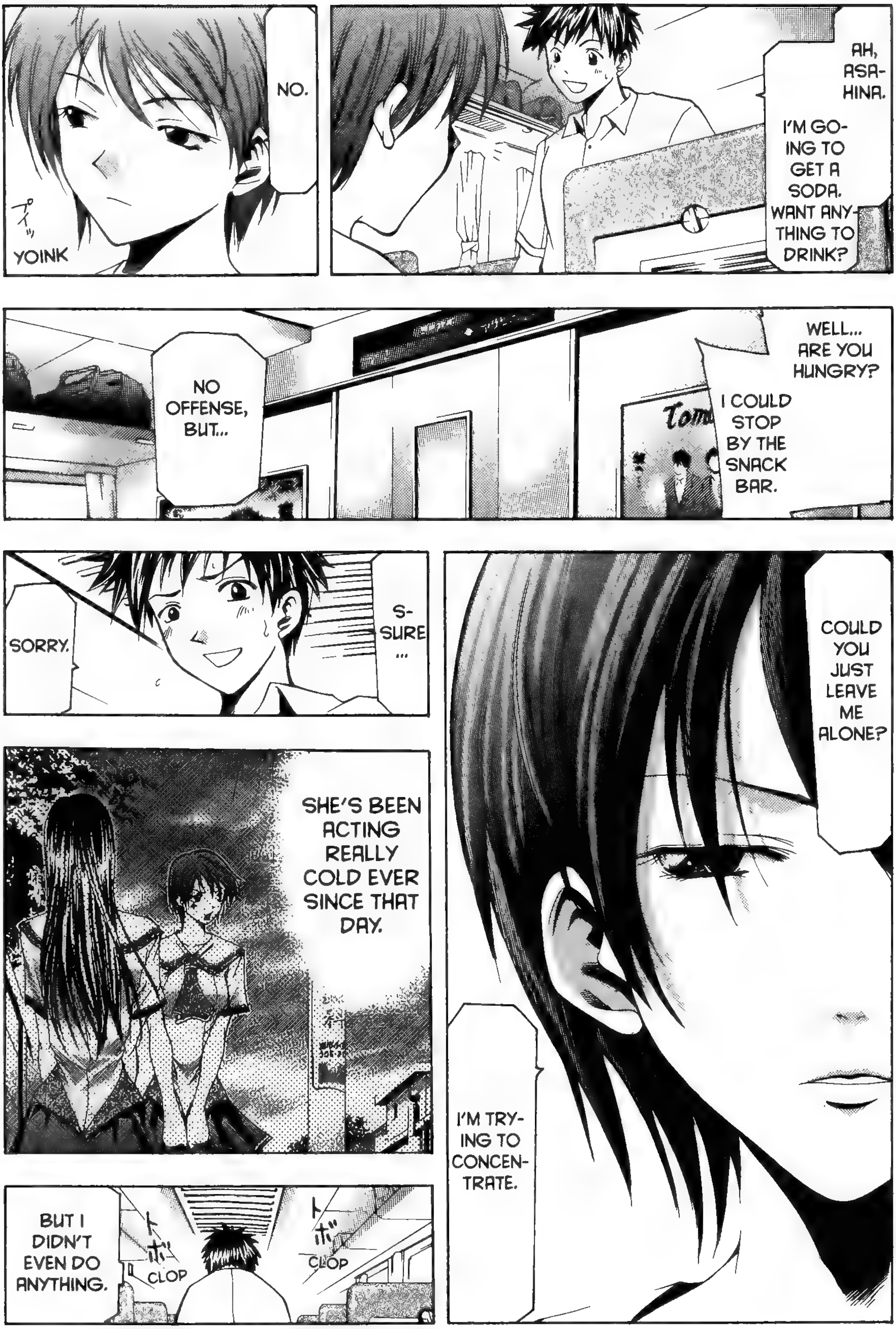
#33 LIPS

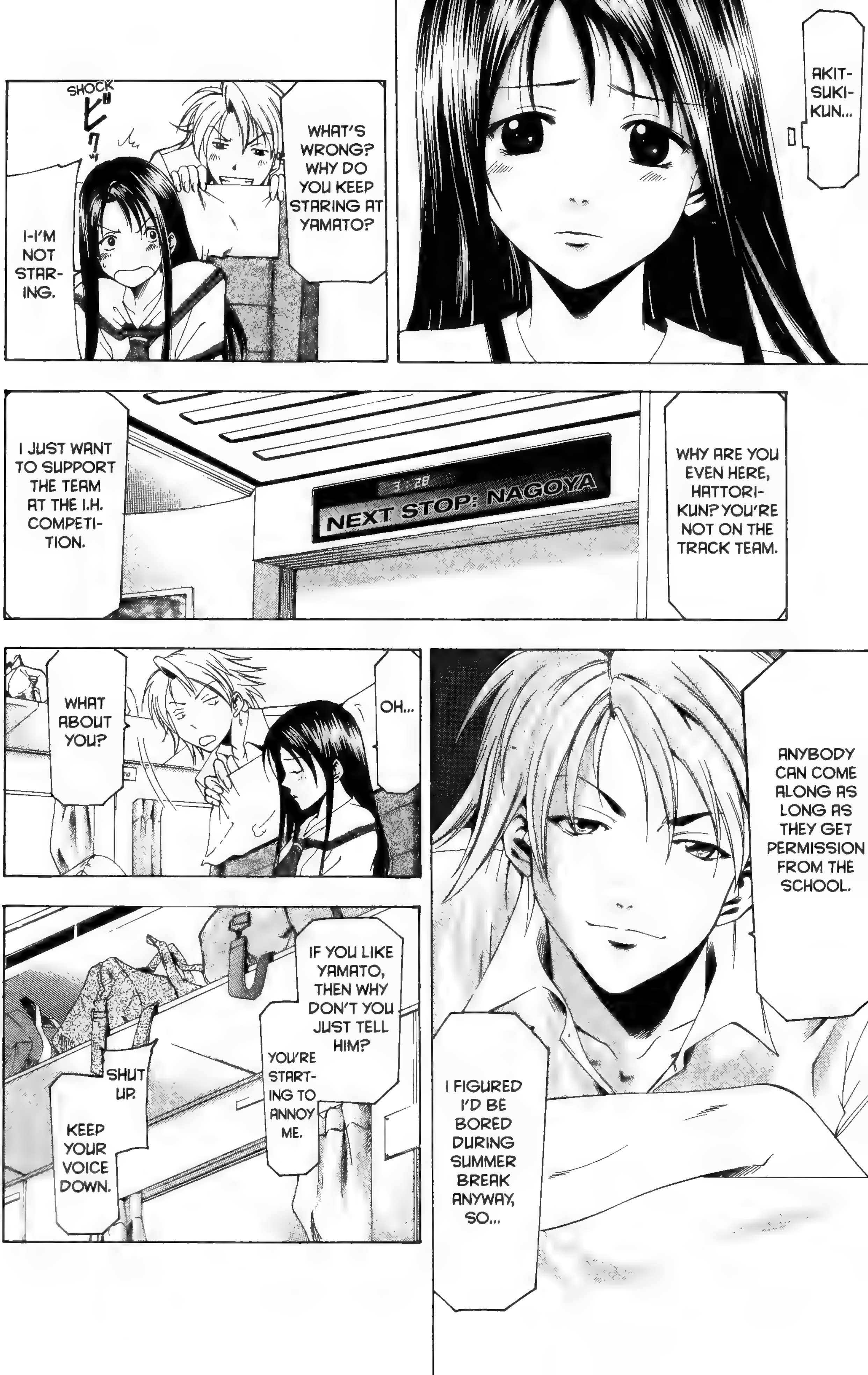
SUZUKA

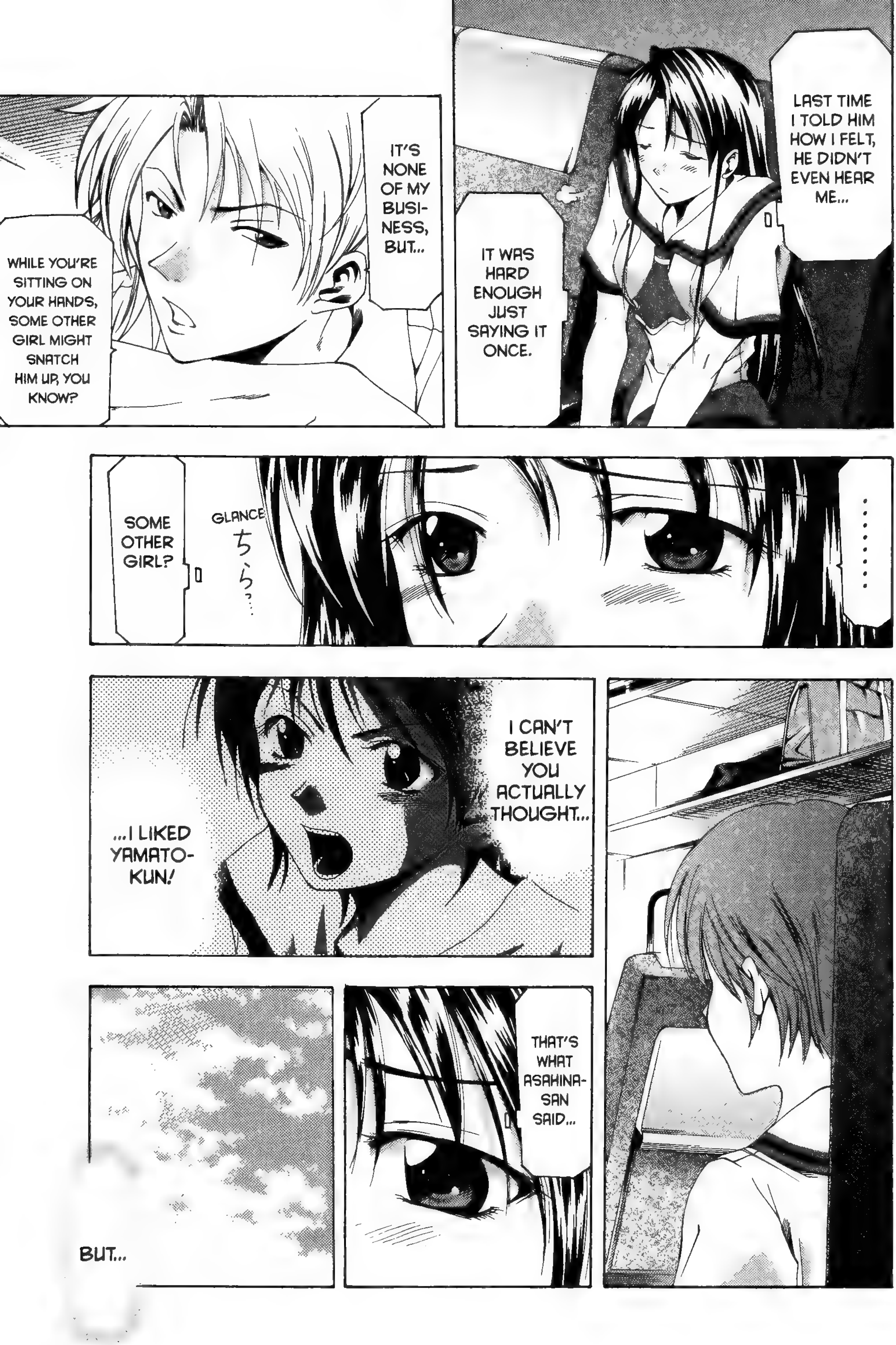


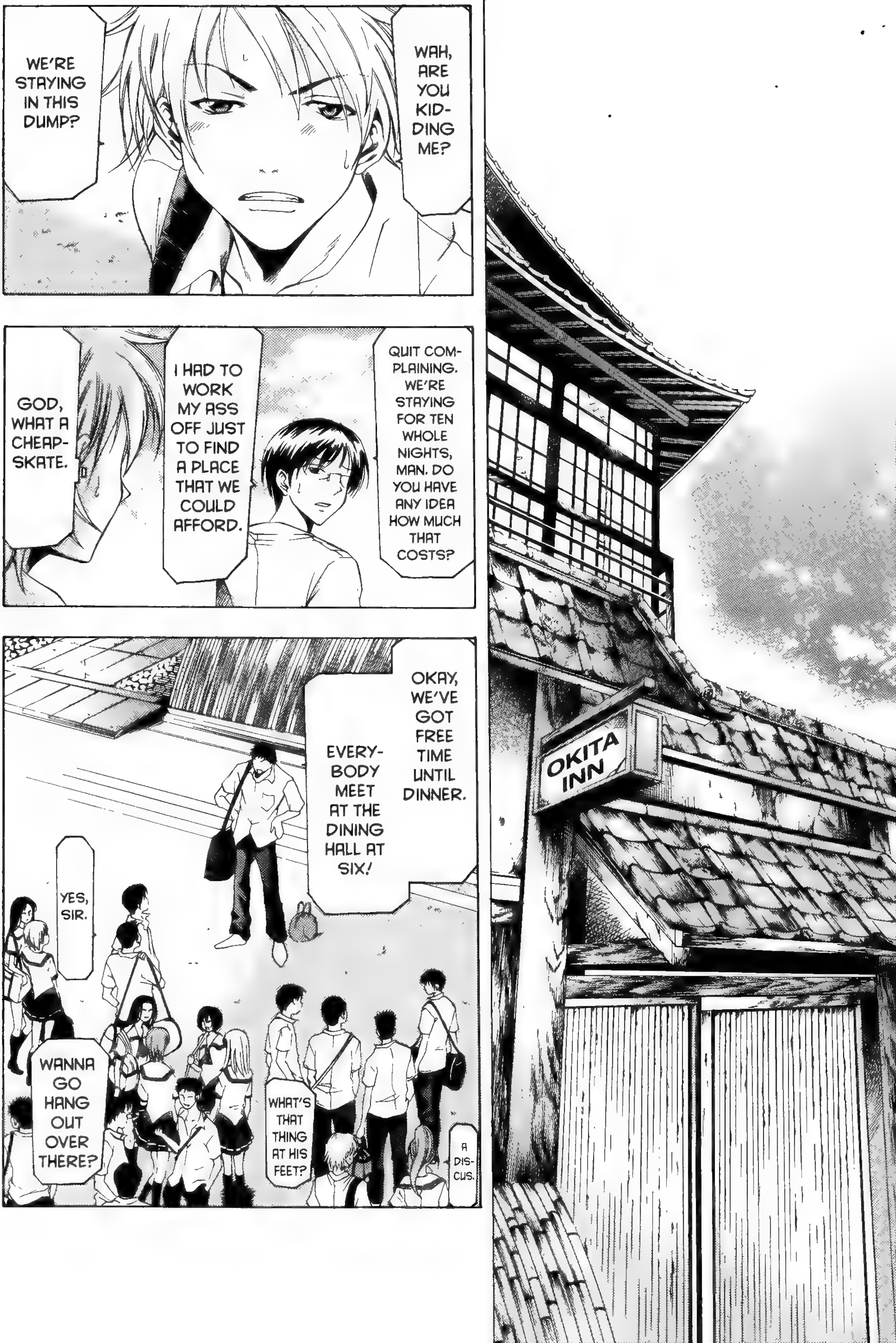

ゴォォォォ
ZOOM
ザワ
CHATTER
I DON'T WANT THIS!
CHATTER
ザワ
HERE COMES HER SUGAR DADDY.
HA, HA, HA.
ザワ
CHATTER
I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY'RE HOLDING THE I.H. COMPETITION IN HIROSHIMA.
HERE I AM ON A TRAIN HEADING RIGHT BACK TO MY HOMETOWN.
ガツ
SLAM
HEY!

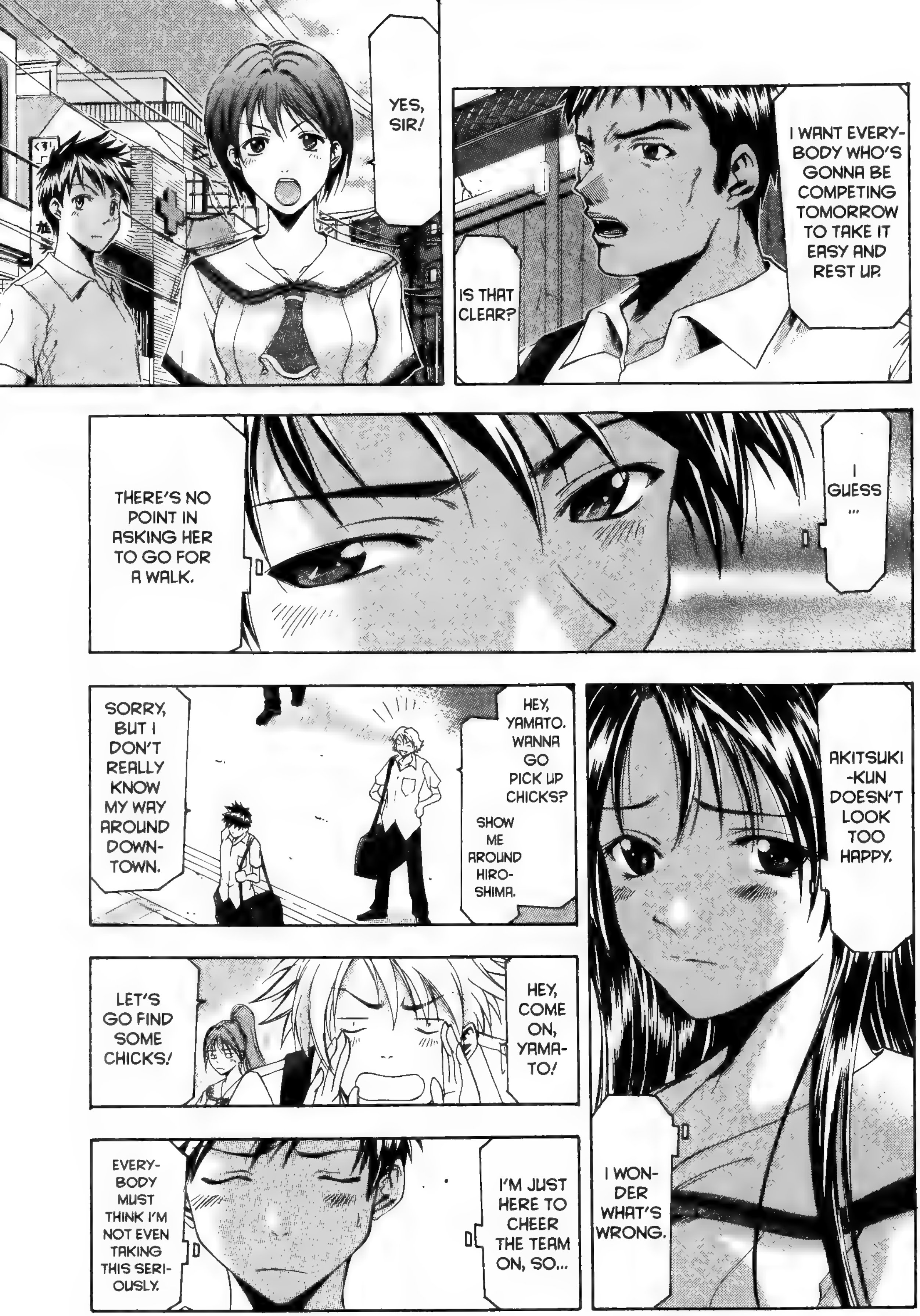

LISTEN TO ME WHEN I'M TALKING TO YOU!
SQUEEZE
OUCH!
SQUEEZE
I'M RETIRING AFTER THIS COMPETITION.
NUGGIE
NUGGIE
SO I NEED YOU TO WORK EXTRA HARD.
UH-HUH. OKAY.
I'LL WORK EXTRA HARD.
WORKING EXTRA HARD ISN'T ENOUGH. YOU'VE GOTTA MAKE IT INTO THE I.H. COMPETITION. SHOW SOME SPIRIT.
THWACKA
THWACKA
AS SOON AS WE GET THERE, I'M PUTTING YOU ON A SPECIAL REGIMEN...
UH, I'M GONNA GO BUY A SODA.
HEY, AKITSUKI! WAIT UP!
IF I SIT WITH HIM ANY LONGER, THEY'LL CARRY ME AWAY IN A STRETCHER.

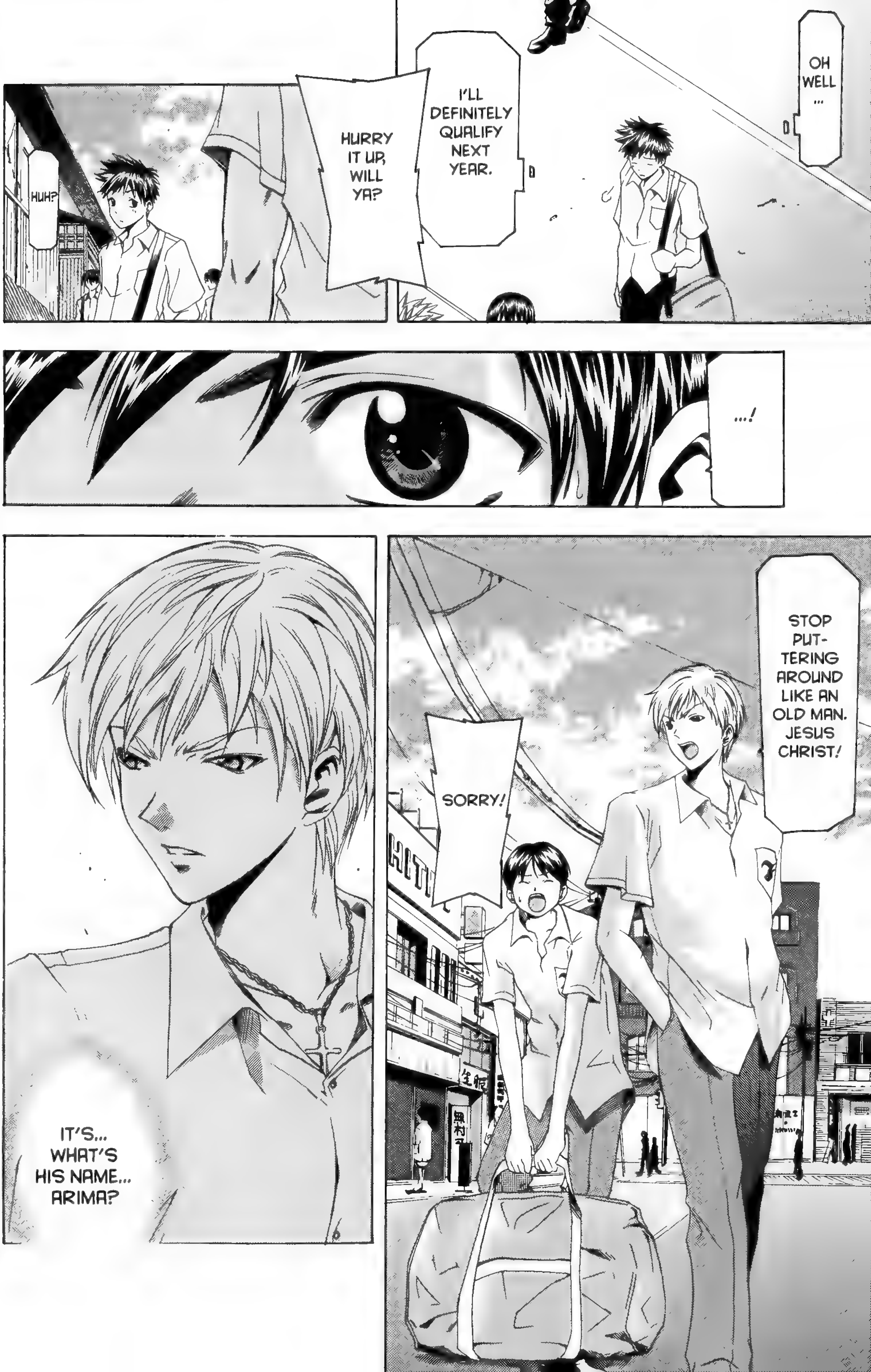

AH, ASAHINA.
I'M GOING TO GET A SODA. WANT ANYTHING TO DRINK?
NO.
プイッ
YOINK
WELL... ARE YOU HUNGRY?
I COULD STOP BY THE SNACK BAR.
Tom
NO OFFENSE, BUT...
COULD YOU JUST LEAVE ME ALONE?
I'M TRYING TO CONCENTRATE.
S-SURE...
SORRY.
SHE'S BEEN ACTING REALLY COLD EVER SINCE THAT DAY.
トボ
CLOP
トボ
CLOP
BUT I DIDN'T EVEN DO ANYTHING.

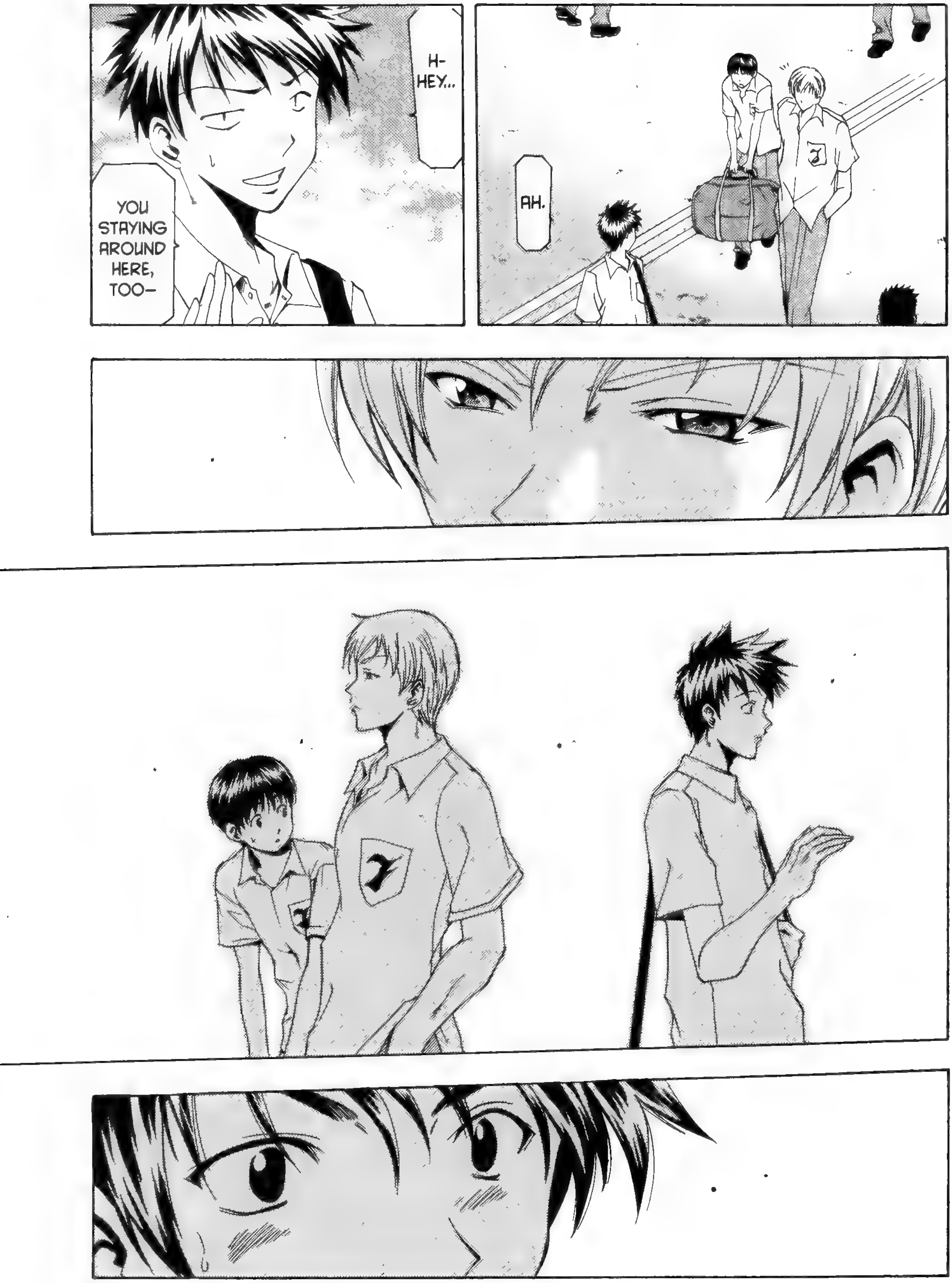

AKITSUKI-KUN...
WHAT'S WRONG? WHY DO YOU KEEP STARING AT YAMATO?
SHOCK
I-I'M NOT STARING.
WHY ARE YOU EVEN HERE, HATTORI-KUN? YOU'RE NOT ON THE TRACK TEAM.
3:28
NEXT STOP: NAGOYA
I JUST WANT TO SUPPORT THE TEAM AT THE I.H. COMPETITION.
ANYBODY CAN COME ALONG AS LONG AS THEY GET PERMISSION FROM THE SCHOOL.
I FIGURED I'D BE BORED DURING SUMMER BREAK ANYWAY, SO...
OH...
WHAT ABOUT YOU?
IF YOU LIKE YAMATO, THEN WHY DON'T YOU JUST TELL HIM?
YOU'RE STARTING TO ANNOY ME.
SHUT UP.
KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN.

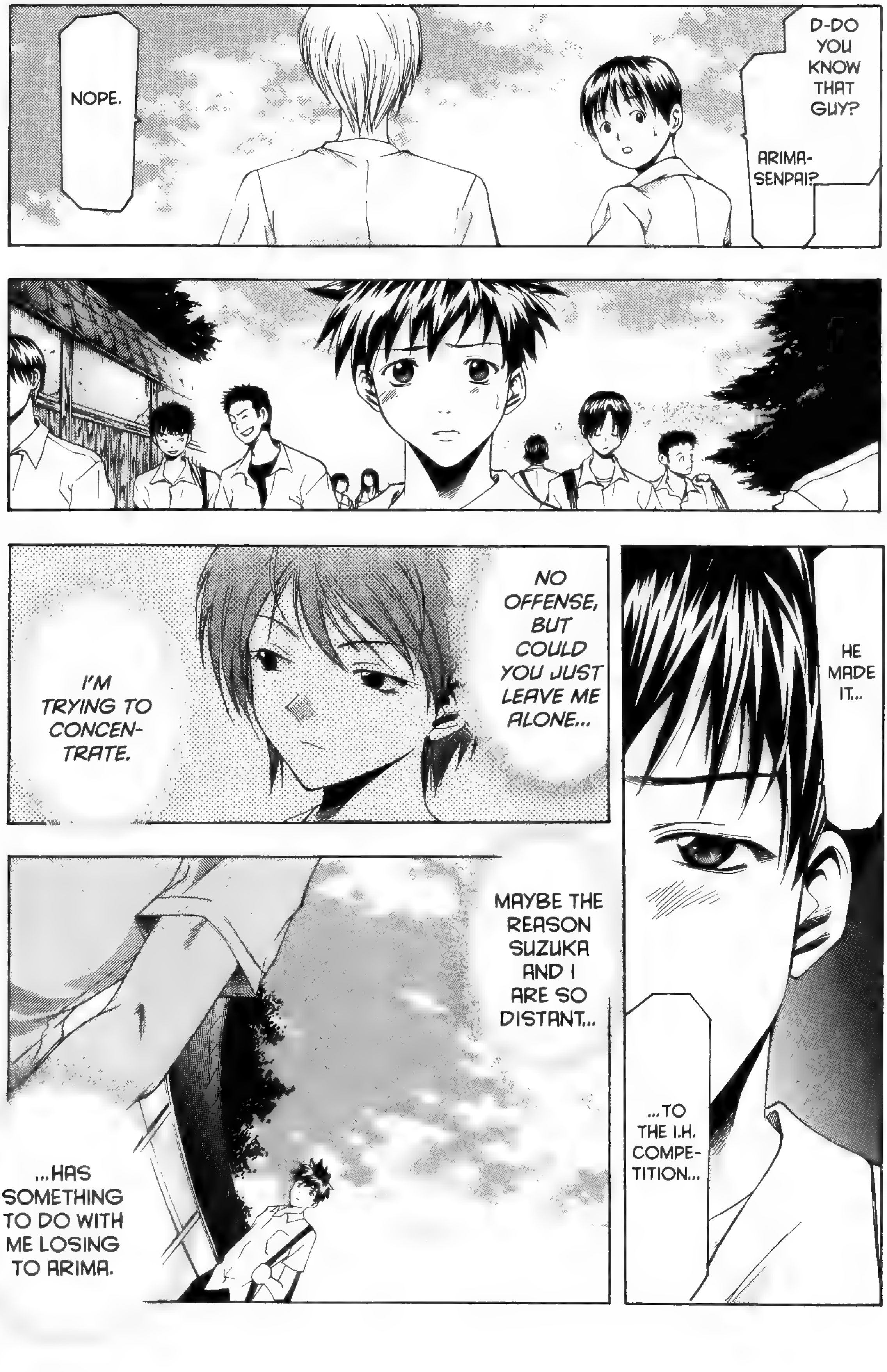

LAST TIME I TOLD HIM HOW I FELT, HE DIDN'T EVEN HEAR ME...
IT WAS HARD ENOUGH JUST SAYING IT ONCE.
IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS, BUT...
WHILE YOU'RE SITTING ON YOUR HANDS, SOME OTHER GIRL MIGHT SNATCH HIM UP, YOU KNOW?
....
GLANCE
ちら…
SOME OTHER GIRL?
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU ACTUALLY THOUGHT...
...I LIKED YAMATO-KUN!
THAT'S WHAT ASAHINA-SAN SAID...
BUT...

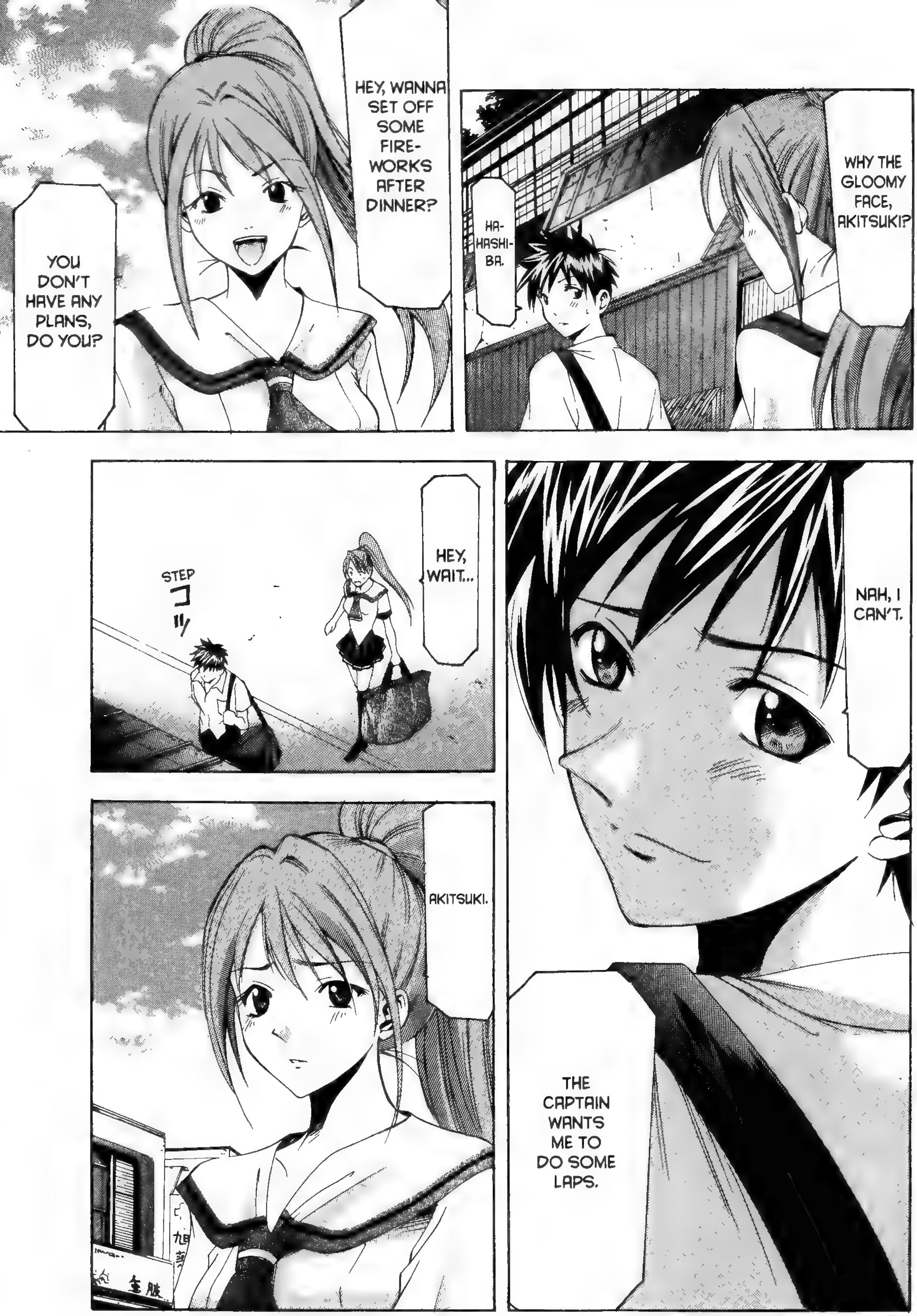

OKITA INN
WAH, ARE YOU KIDDING ME?
WE'RE STAYING IN THIS DUMP?
QUIT COMPLAINING. WE'RE STAYING FOR TEN WHOLE NIGHTS, MAN. DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MUCH THAT COSTS?
I HAD TO WORK MY ASS OFF JUST TO FIND A PLACE THAT WE COULD AFFORD.
GOD, WHAT A CHEAPSKATE.
OKAY, WE'VE GOT FREE TIME UNTIL DINNER.
EVERYBODY MEET AT THE DINING HALL AT SIX!
YES, SIR.
A DISCUS.
WHAT'S THAT THING AT HIS FEET?
WANNA GO HANG OUT OVER THERE?

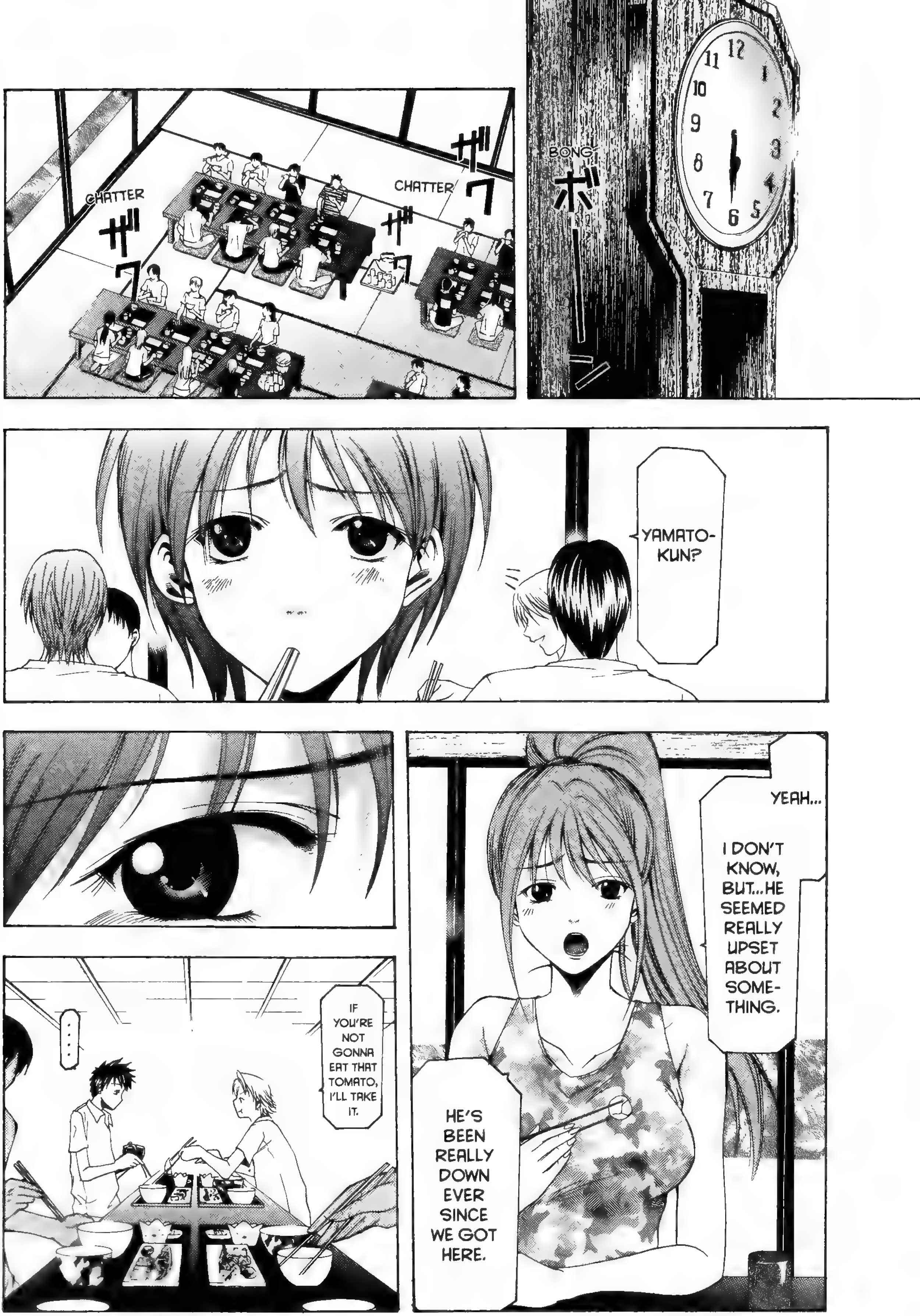

I WANT EVERYBODY WHO'S GONNA BE COMPETING TOMORROW TO TAKE IT EASY AND REST UP.
IS THAT CLEAR?
YES, SIR!
I GUESS ...
THERE'S NO POINT IN ASKING HER TO GO FOR A WALK.
AKITSUKI-KUN DOESN'T LOOK TOO HAPPY.
I WONDER WHAT'S WRONG.
HEY, YAMATO. WANNA GO PICK UP CHICKS?
SHOW ME AROUND HIROSHIMA.
SORRY, BUT I DON'T REALLY KNOW MY WAY AROUND DOWNTOWN.
HEY, COME ON, YAMATO!
LET'S GO FIND SOME CHICKS!
I'M JUST HERE TO CHEER THE TEAM ON, SO...
EVERYBODY MUST THINK I'M NOT EVEN TAKING THIS SERIOUSLY.

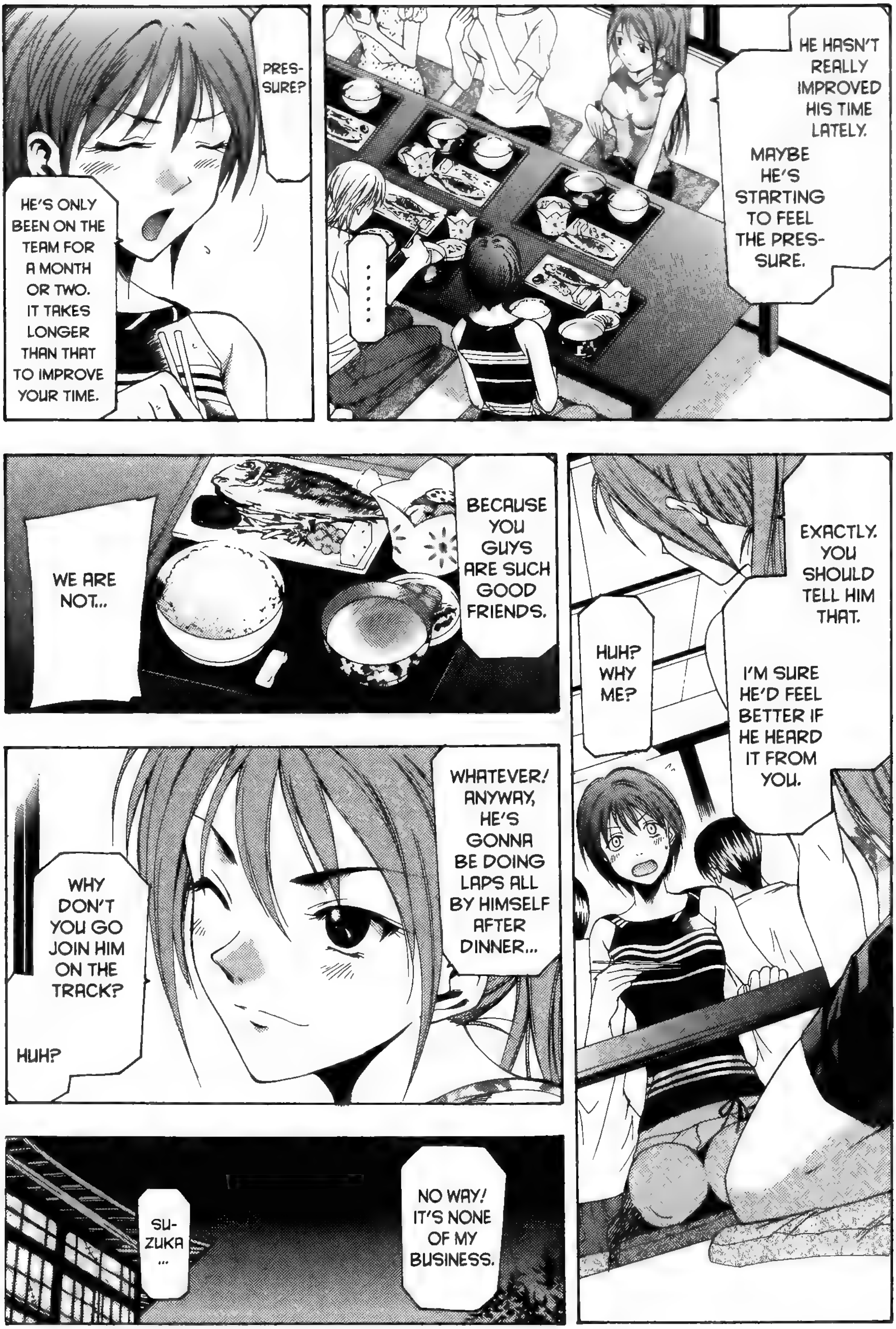

OH WELL ...
I'LL DEFINITELY QUALIFY NEXT YEAR.
HURRY IT UP, WILL YA?
HUH?
...!
STOP PUTTERING AROUND LIKE AN OLD MAN. JESUS CHRIST!
SORRY!
IT'S... WHAT'S HIS NAME... ARIMA?

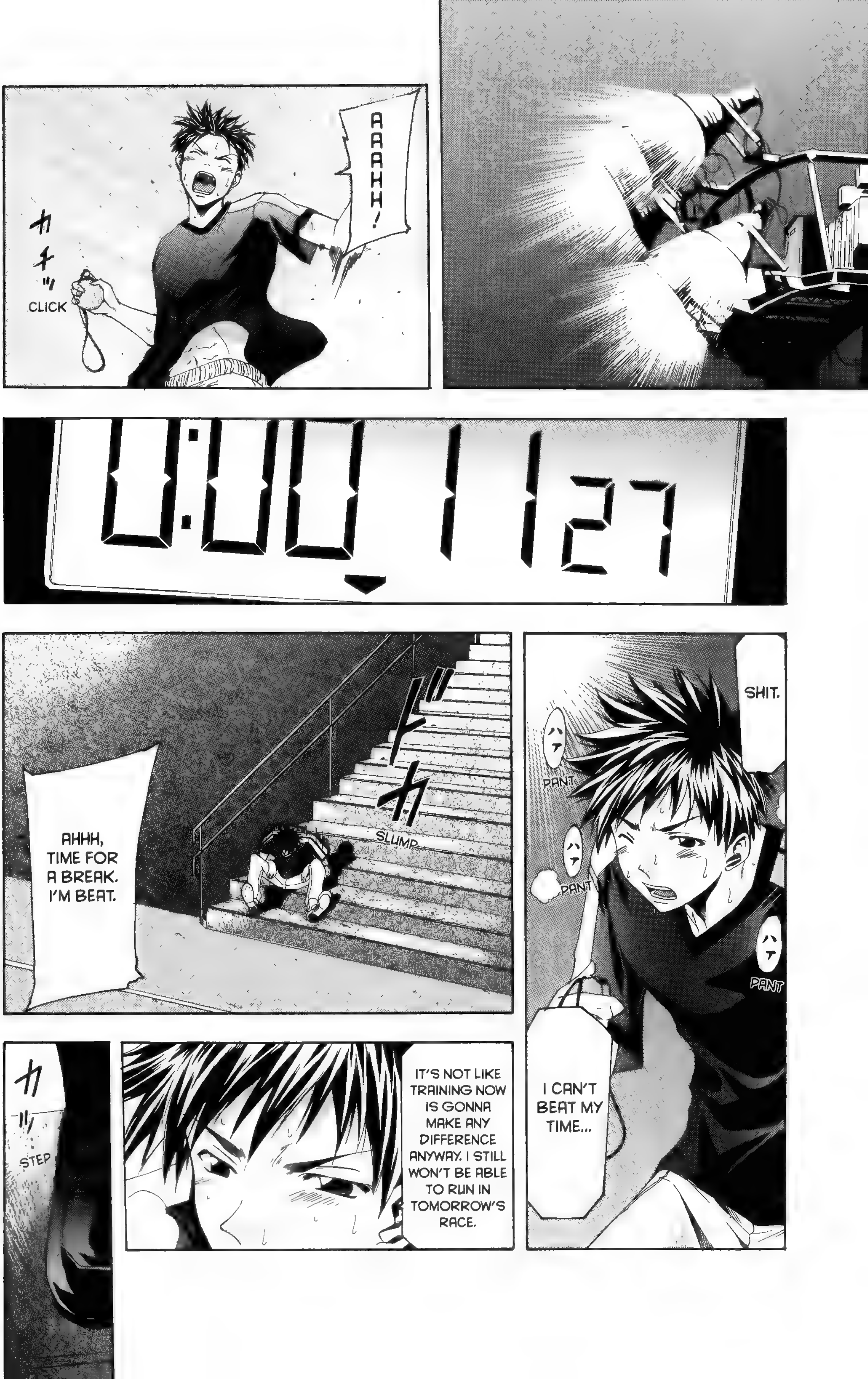

AH.
H- HEY...
YOU STAYING AROUND HERE, TOO—

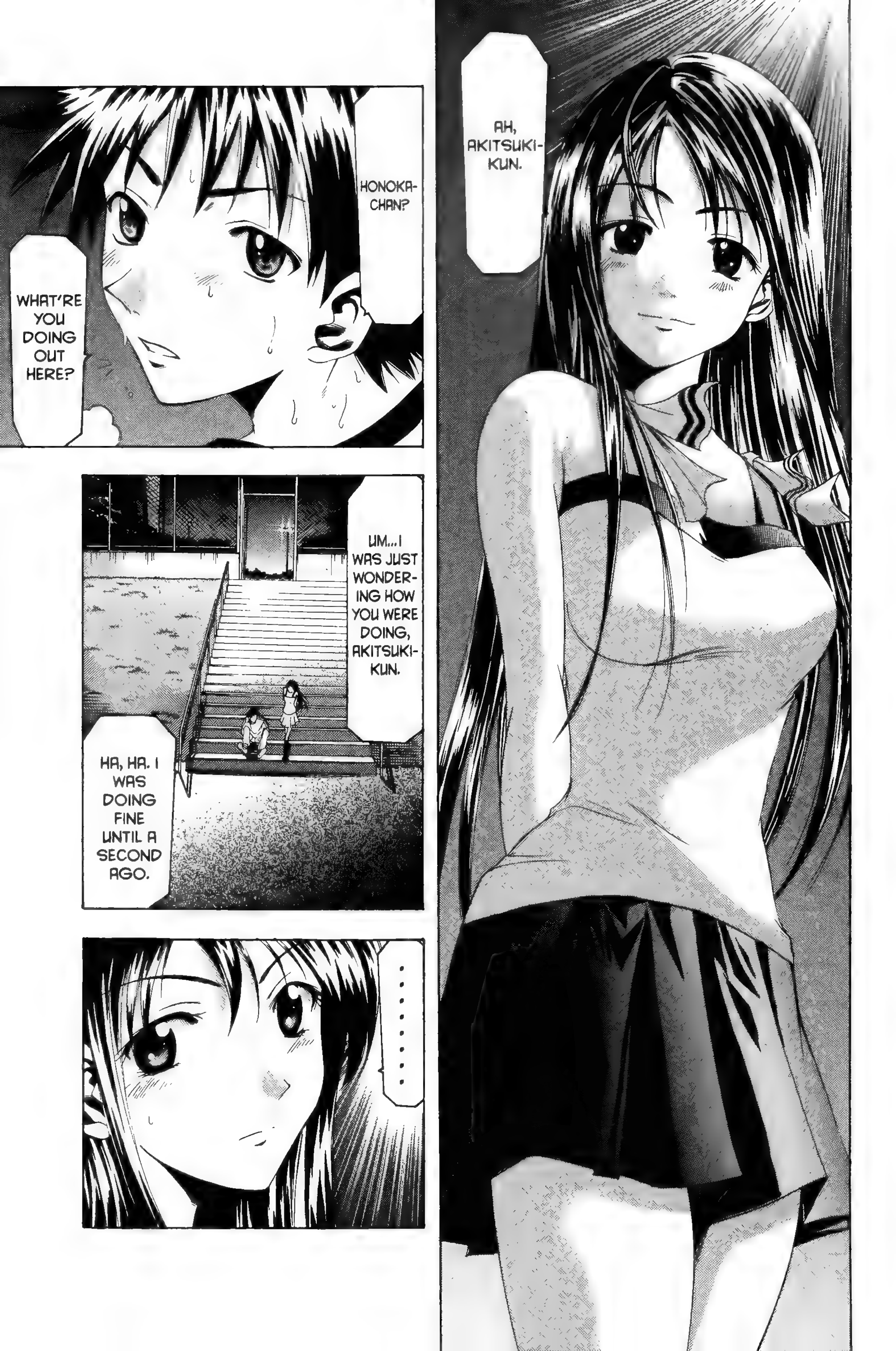

D-DO YOU KNOW THAT GUY?
ARIMA-SENPAI?
NOPE.
HE MADE IT...
...TO THE I.H. COMPETITION...
NO OFFENSE, BUT COULD YOU JUST LEAVE ME ALONE...
I'M TRYING TO CONCENTRATE.
MAYBE THE REASON SUZUKA AND I ARE SO DISTANT...
...HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH ME LOSING TO ARIMA.

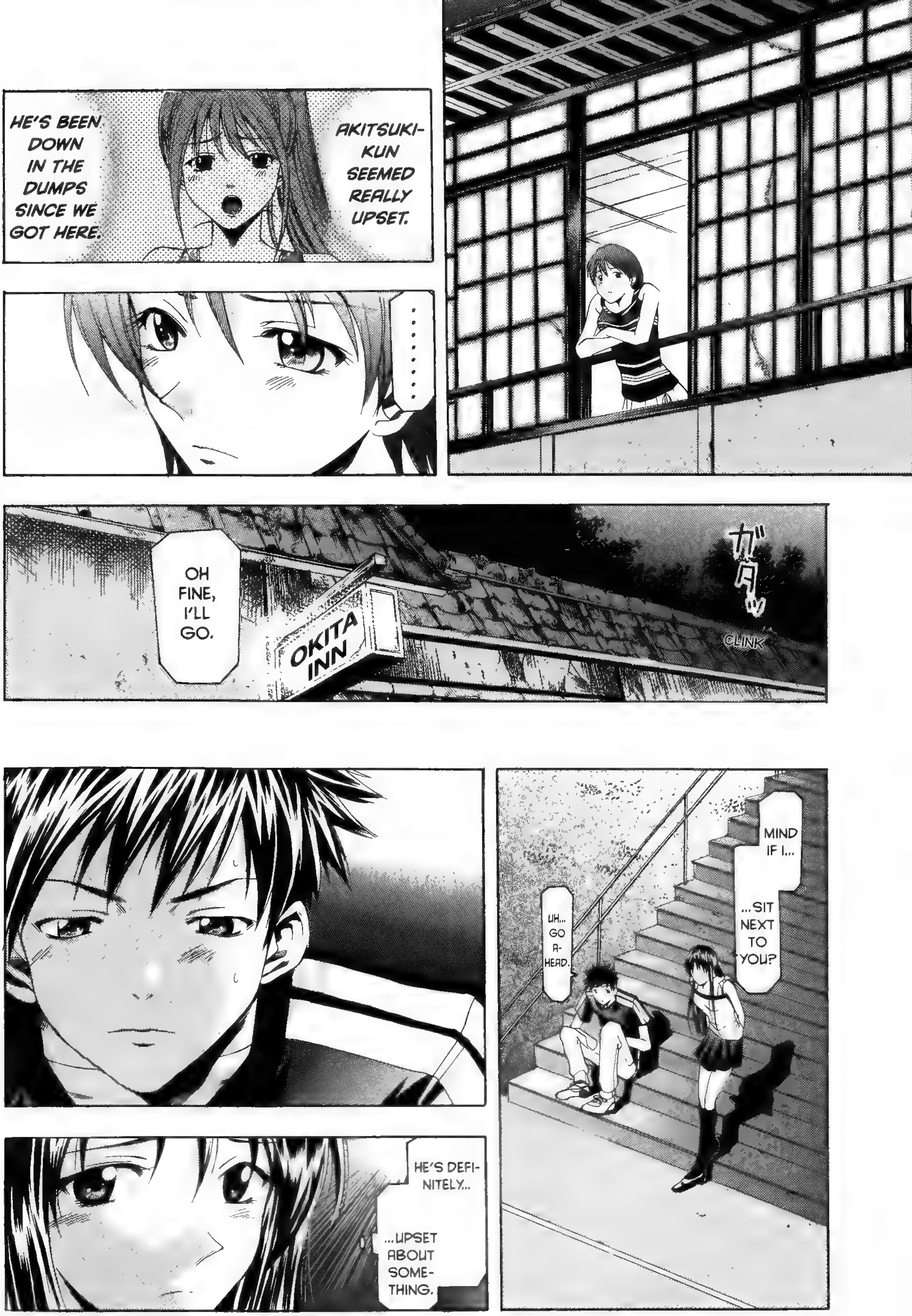

WHY THE GLOOMY FACE, AKITSUKI?
HA-HASHIBA.
HEY, WANNA SET OFF SOME FIREWORKS AFTER DINNER?
YOU DON'T HAVE ANY PLANS, DO YOU?
NAH, I CAN'T.
THE CAPTAIN WANTS ME TO DO SOME LAPS.
HEY, WAIT...
STEP
コッ
AKITSUKI.

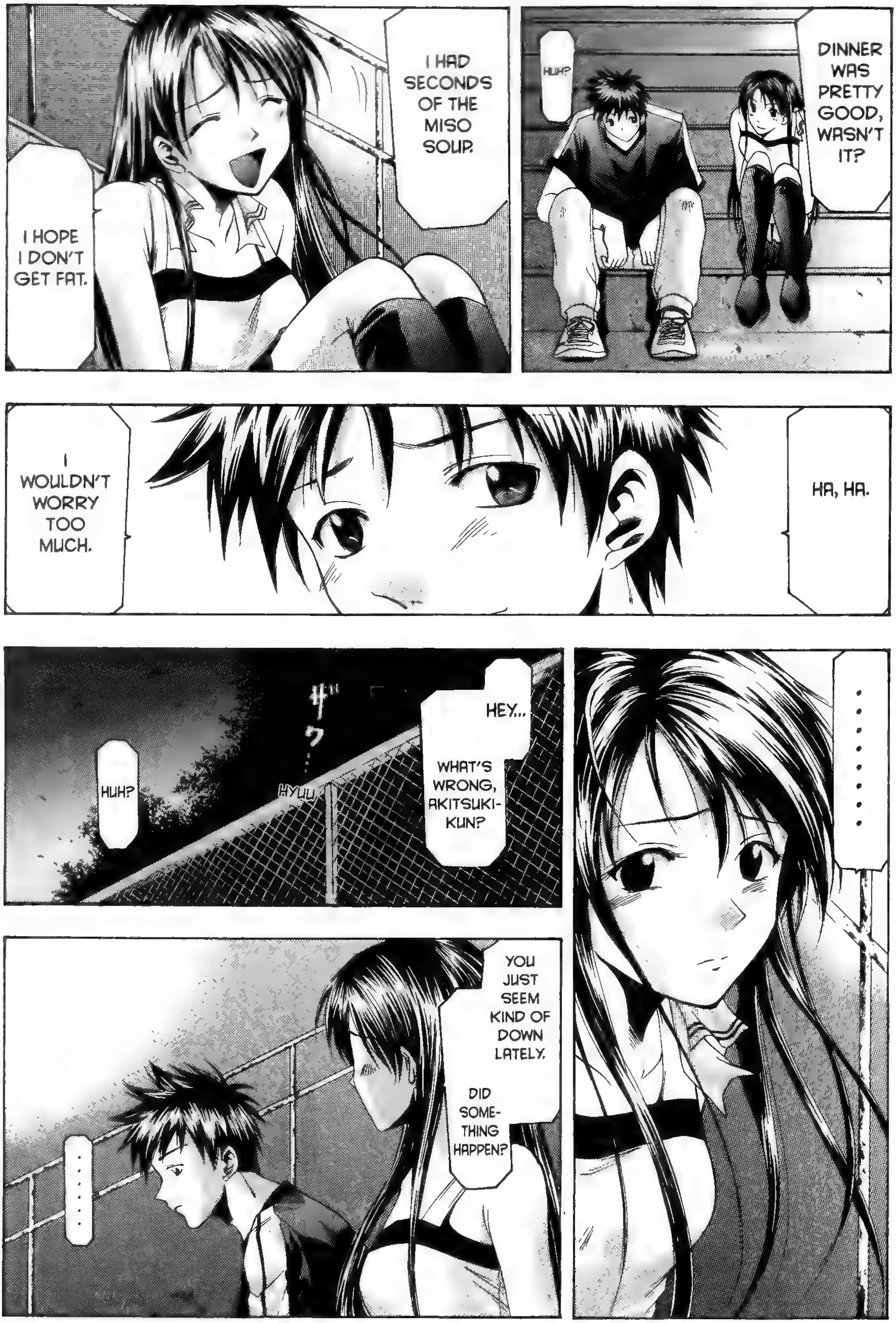

BONG
ボーン
CHATTER
ザワ
ザワ
CHATTER
YAMATO-KUN?
YEAH...
I DON'T KNOW, BUT...HE SEEMED REALLY UPSET ABOUT SOMETHING.
HE'S BEEN REALLY DOWN EVER SINCE WE GOT HERE.
IF YOU'RE NOT GONNA EAT THAT TOMATO, I'LL TAKE IT.
.....

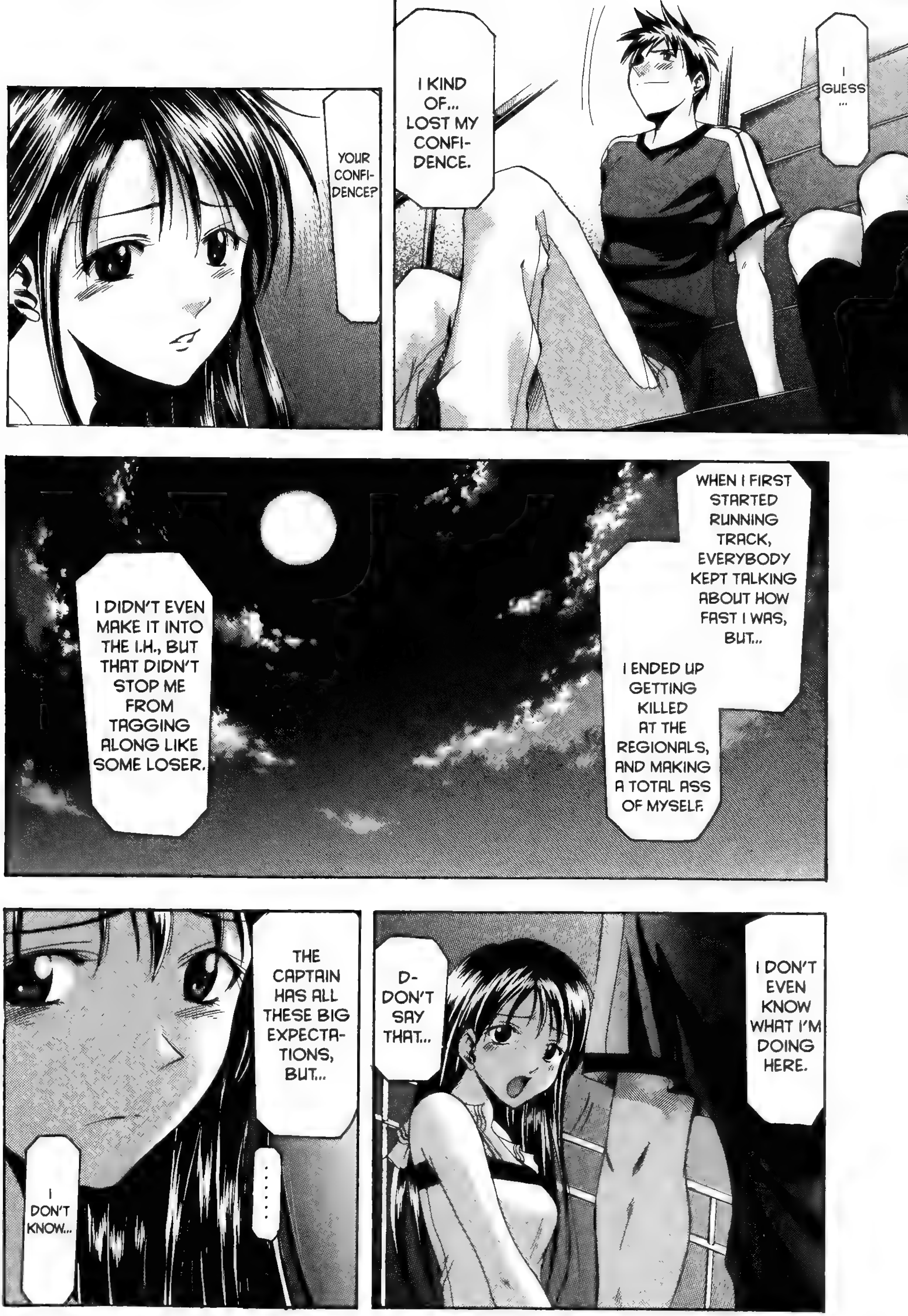

HE HASN'T REALLY IMPROVED HIS TIME LATELY.
MAYBE HE'S STARTING TO FEEL THE PRESSURE.
......
PRESSURE?
HE'S ONLY BEEN ON THE TEAM FOR A MONTH OR TWO. IT TAKES LONGER THAN THAT TO IMPROVE YOUR TIME.
EXACTLY. YOU SHOULD TELL HIM THAT.
HUH? WHY ME?
I'M SURE HE'D FEEL BETTER IF HE HEARD IT FROM YOU.
BECAUSE YOU GUYS ARE SUCH GOOD FRIENDS.
WE ARE NOT...
WHATEVER! ANYWAY, HE'S GONNA BE DOING LAPS ALL BY HIMSELF AFTER DINNER...
WHY DON'T YOU GO JOIN HIM ON THE TRACK?
HUH?
NO WAY! IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS.
SUZUKA...

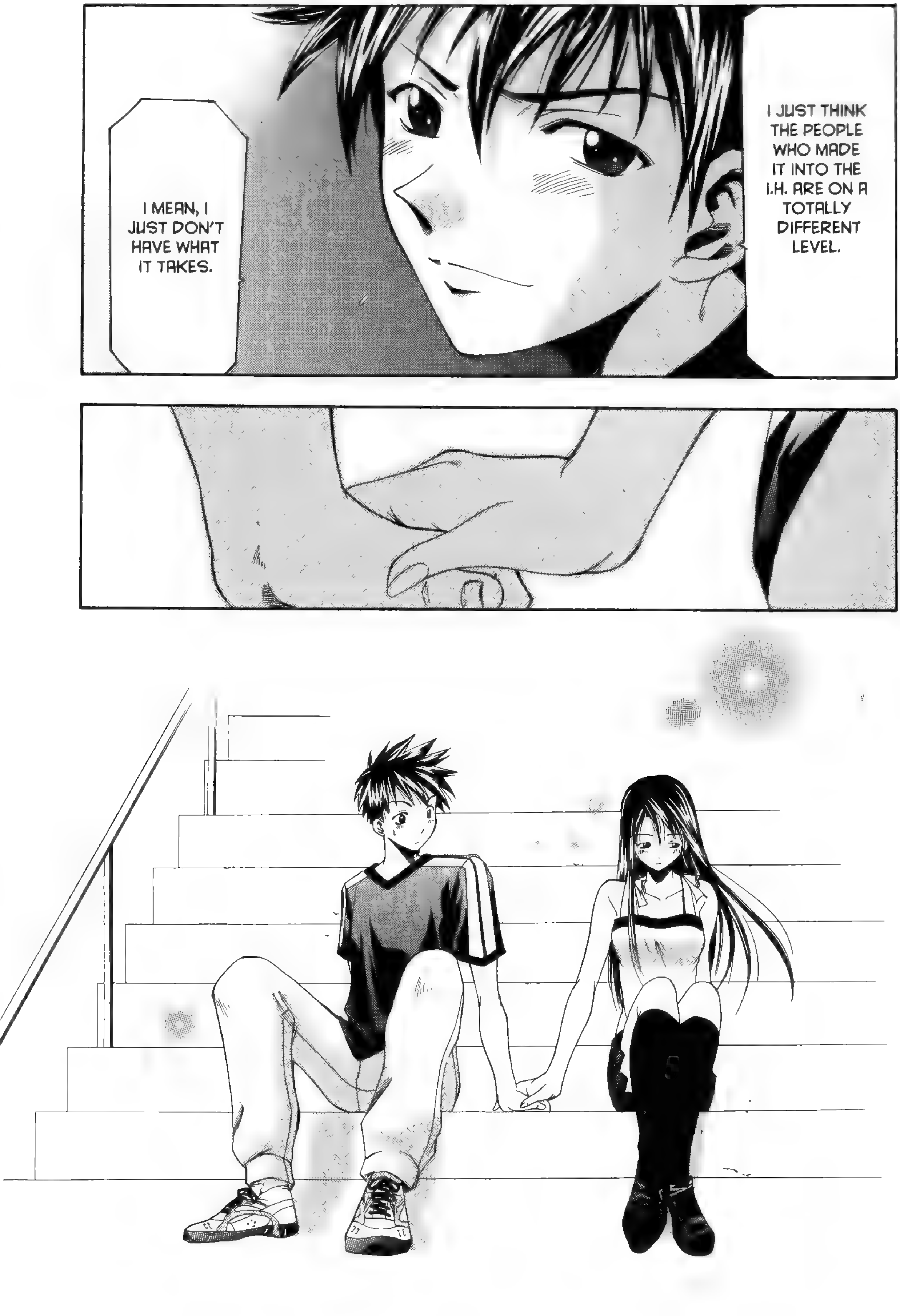

AAAAHH!
カチッ
CLICK
0:00 11 27
SHIT.
ハァ
PANT
ハァ
PANT
ハァ
PANT
I CAN'T BEAT MY TIME...
ドカ
SLUMP
AHHH, TIME FOR A BREAK. I'M BEAT.
IT'S NOT LIKE TRAINING NOW IS GONNA MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE ANYWAY. I STILL WON'T BE ABLE TO RUN IN TOMORROW'S RACE.
カッ
STEP

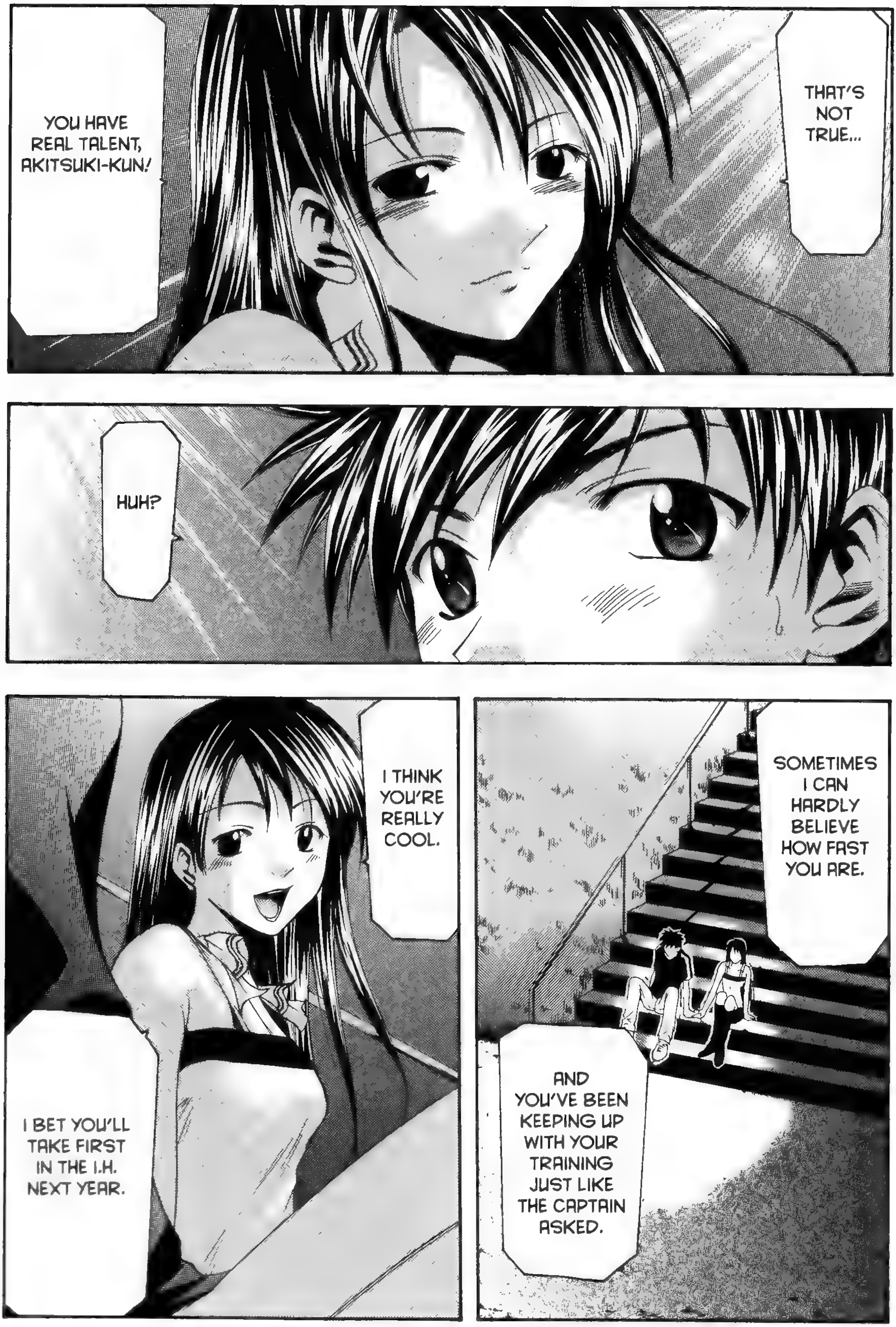

AH, AKITSUKI-KUN.
HONOKA-CHAN?
WHAT'RE YOU DOING OUT HERE?
UM...I WAS JUST WONDERING HOW YOU WERE DOING, AKITSUKI-KUN.
HA, HA. I WAS DOING FINE UNTIL A SECOND AGO.
....

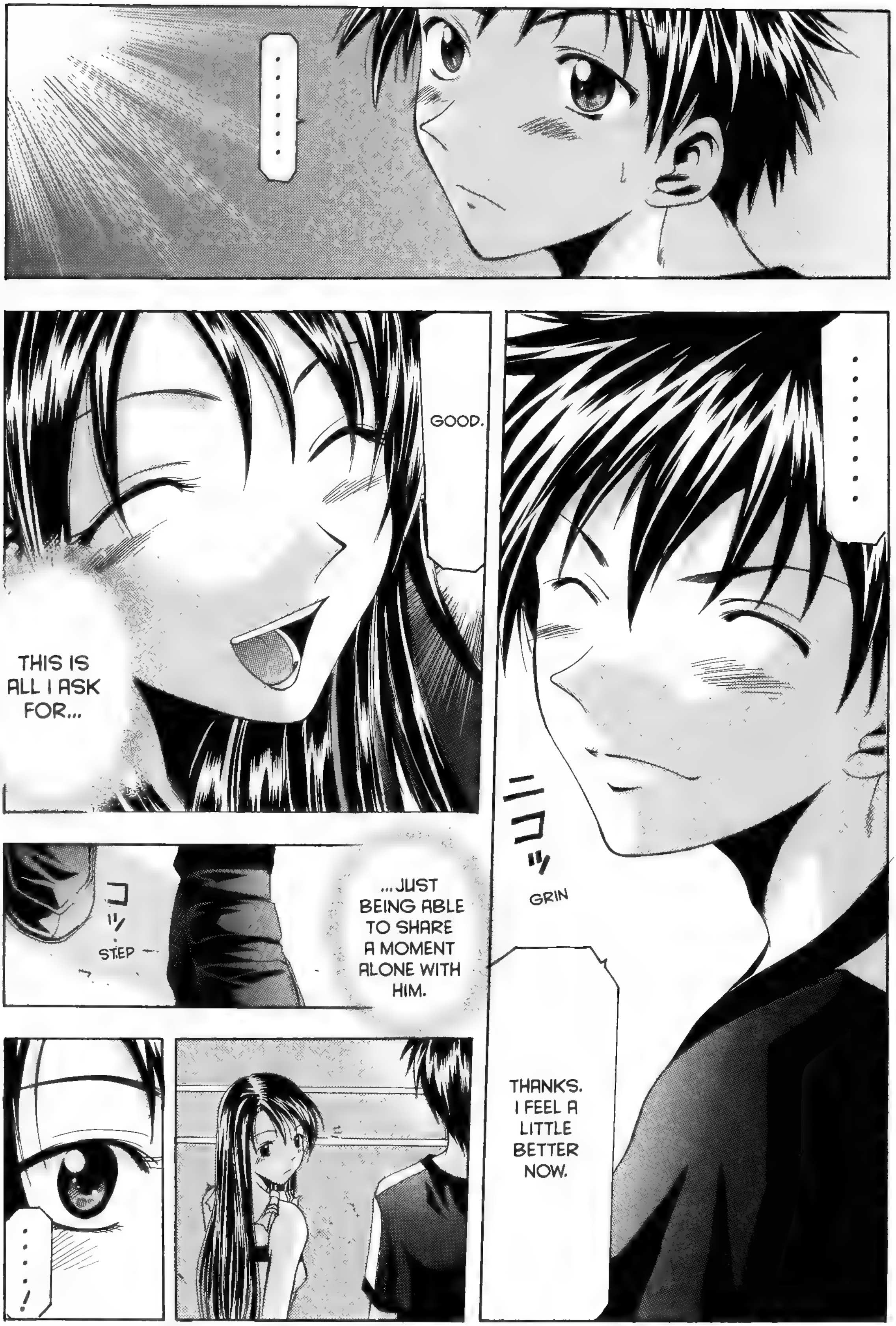

AKITSUKI-KUN SEEMED REALLY UPSET.
HE'S BEEN DOWN IN THE DUMPS SINCE WE GOT HERE.
......
ガタッ
CLINK
OH FINE, I'LL GO.
OKITA INN
MIND IF I...
...SIT NEXT TO YOU?
UH... GO AHEAD.
HE'S DEFINITELY...
...UPSET ABOUT SOMETHING.

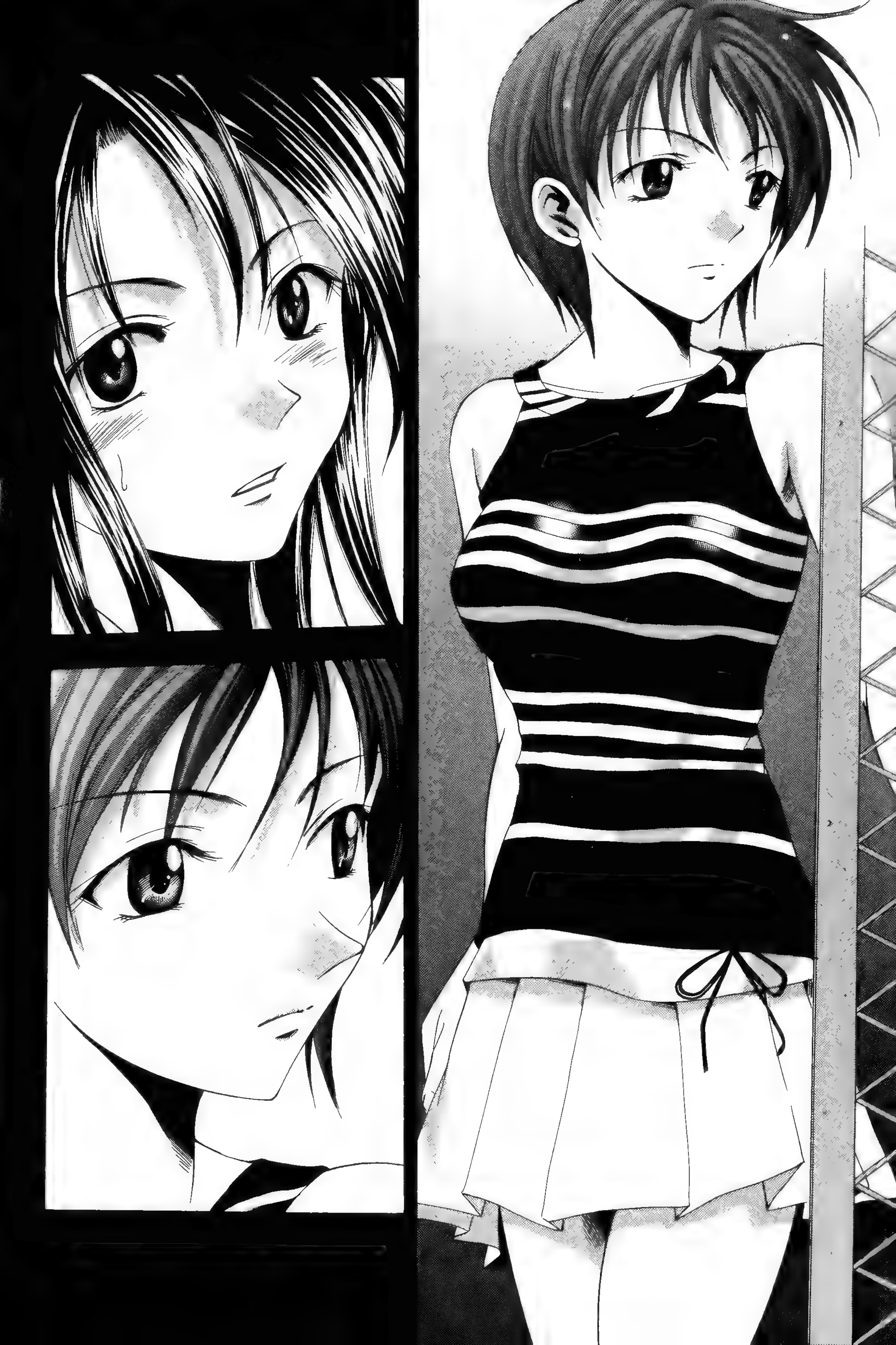

DINNER WAS PRETTY GOOD, WASN'T IT?
HUH?
I HAD SECONDS OF THE MISO SOUP.
I HOPE I DON'T GET FAT.
HA, HA.
I WOULDN'T WORRY TOO MUCH.
......
HEY...
WHAT'S WRONG, AKITSUKI-KUN?
ザワ…
HYUU
HUH?
YOU JUST SEEM KIND OF DOWN LATELY.
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
......

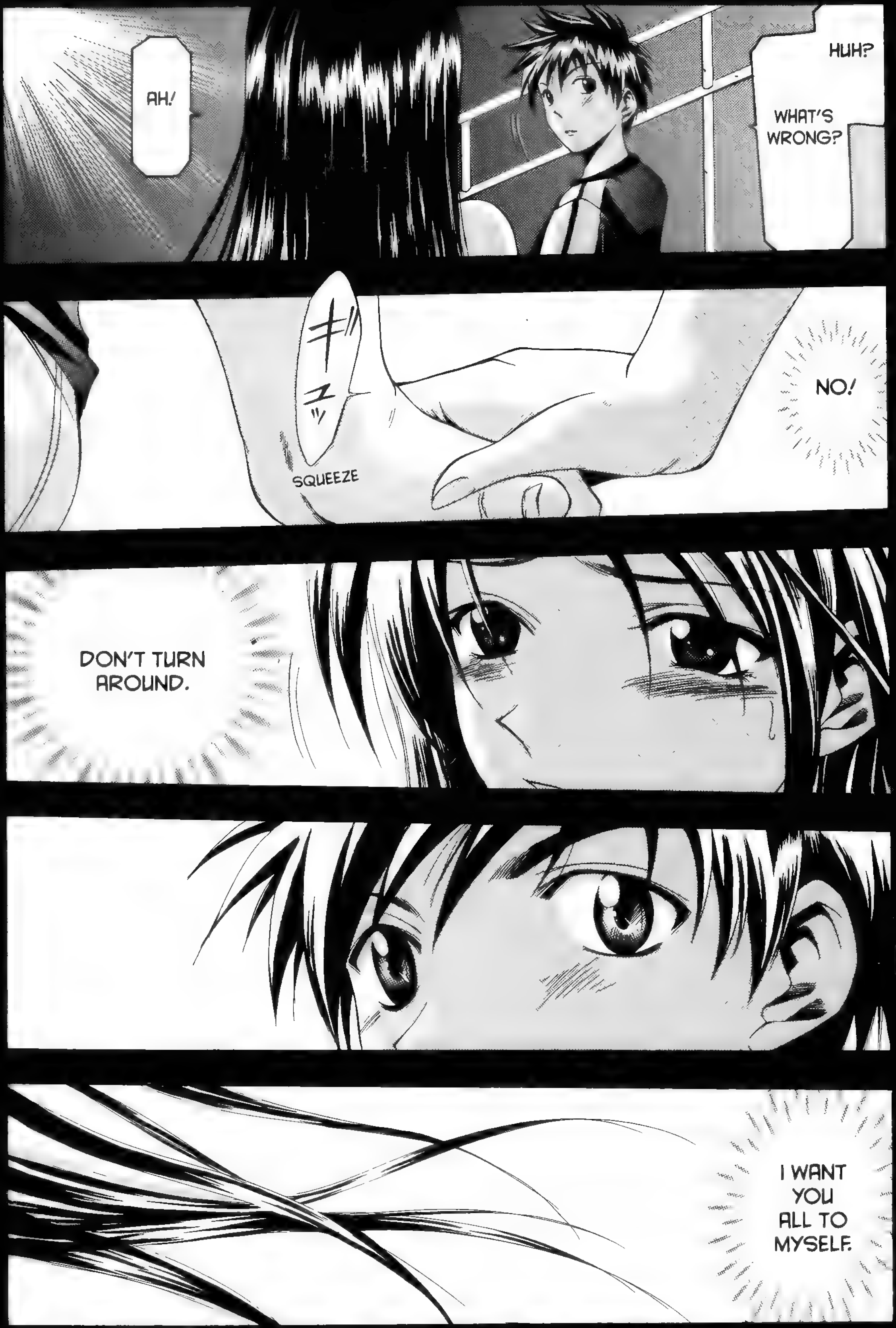

I GUESS...
I KIND OF... LOST MY CONFIDENCE.
YOUR CONFIDENCE?
WHEN I FIRST STARTED RUNNING TRACK, EVERYBODY KEPT TALKING ABOUT HOW FAST I WAS, BUT...
I ENDED UP GETTING KILLED AT THE REGIONALS, AND MAKING A TOTAL ASS OF MYSELF.
I DIDN'T EVEN MAKE IT INTO THE I.H., BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP ME FROM TAGGING ALONG LIKE SOME LOSER.
I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT I'M DOING HERE.
D-DON'T SAY THAT...
THE CAPTAIN HAS ALL THESE BIG EXPECTATIONS, BUT...
......
I DON'T KNOW...

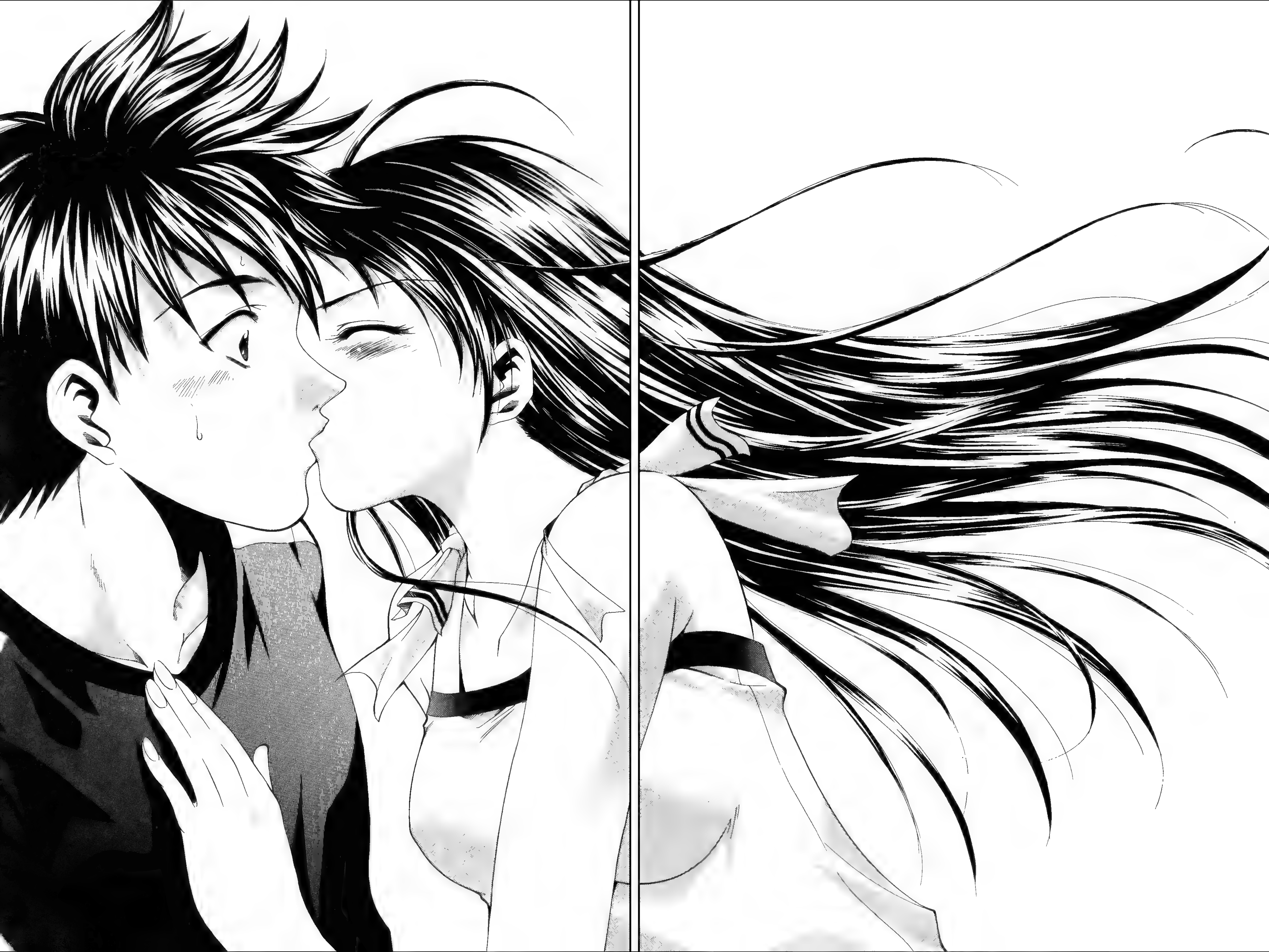

I JUST THINK THE PEOPLE WHO MADE IT INTO THE I.H. ARE ON A TOTALLY DIFFERENT LEVEL.
I MEAN, I JUST DON'T HAVE WHAT IT TAKES.


THAT'S NOT TRUE...
YOU HAVE REAL TALENT, AKITSUKI-KUN!
HUH?
SOMETIMES I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE HOW FAST YOU ARE.
AND YOU'VE BEEN KEEPING UP WITH YOUR TRAINING JUST LIKE THE CAPTAIN ASKED.
I THINK YOU'RE REALLY COOL.
I BET YOU'LL TAKE FIRST IN THE I.H. NEXT YEAR.


......
....
ニコッ
GRIN
THANKS. I FEEL A LITTLE BETTER NOW.
GOOD.
THIS IS ALL I ASK FOR...
...JUST BEING ABLE TO SHARE A MOMENT ALONE WITH HIM.
コッ
STEP
....!

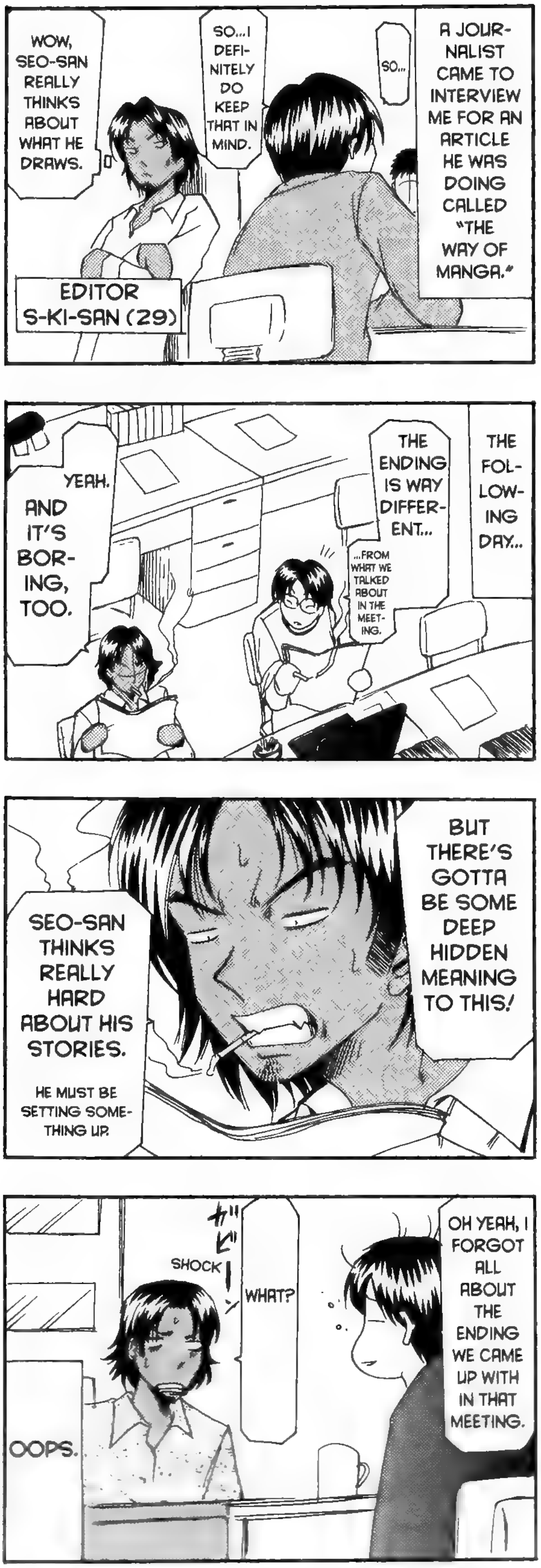


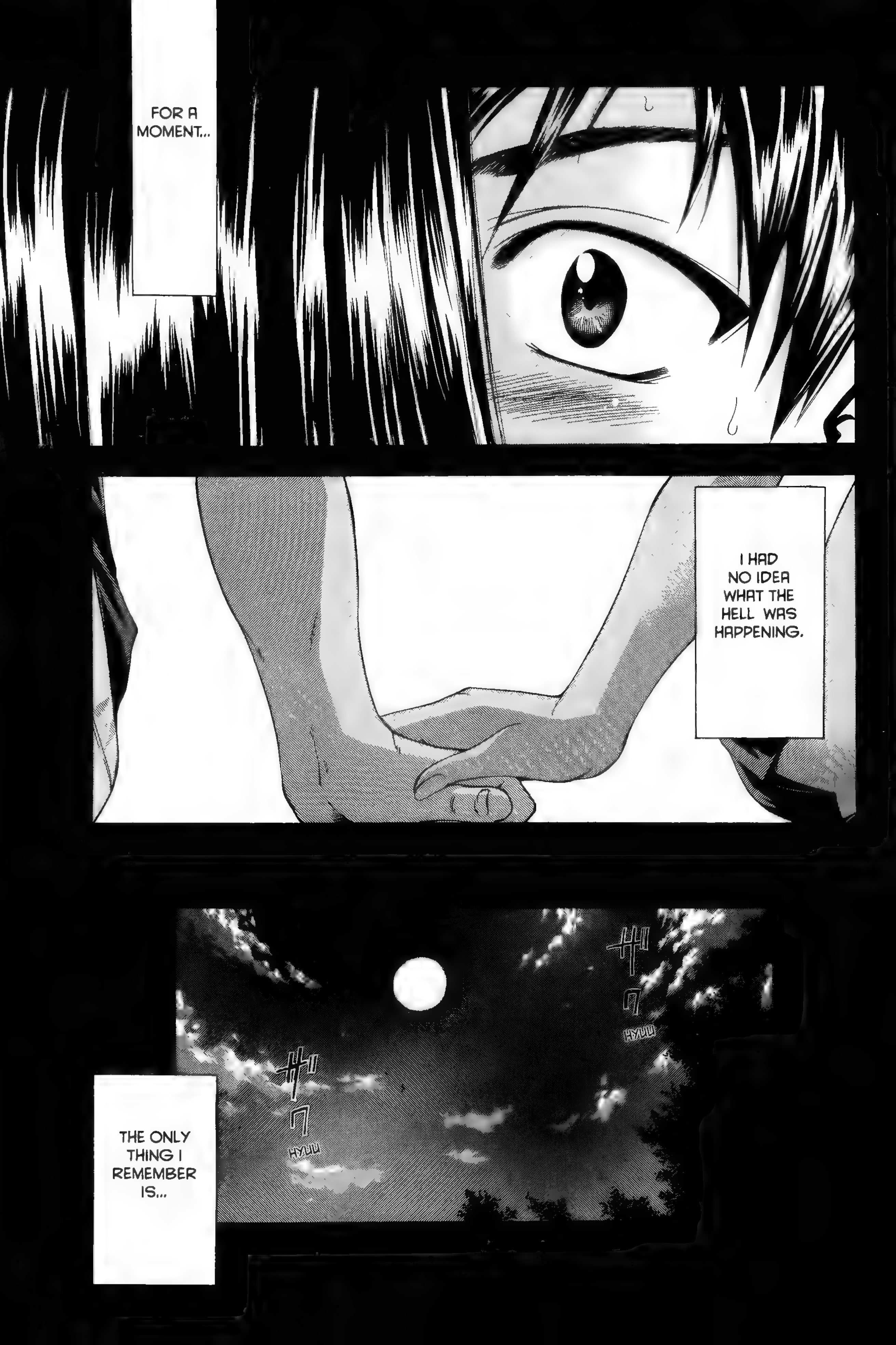

HUH?
WHAT'S WRONG?
AH!
NO!
ギュッ
SQUEEZE
DON'T TURN AROUND.
I WANT YOU ALL TO MYSELF.



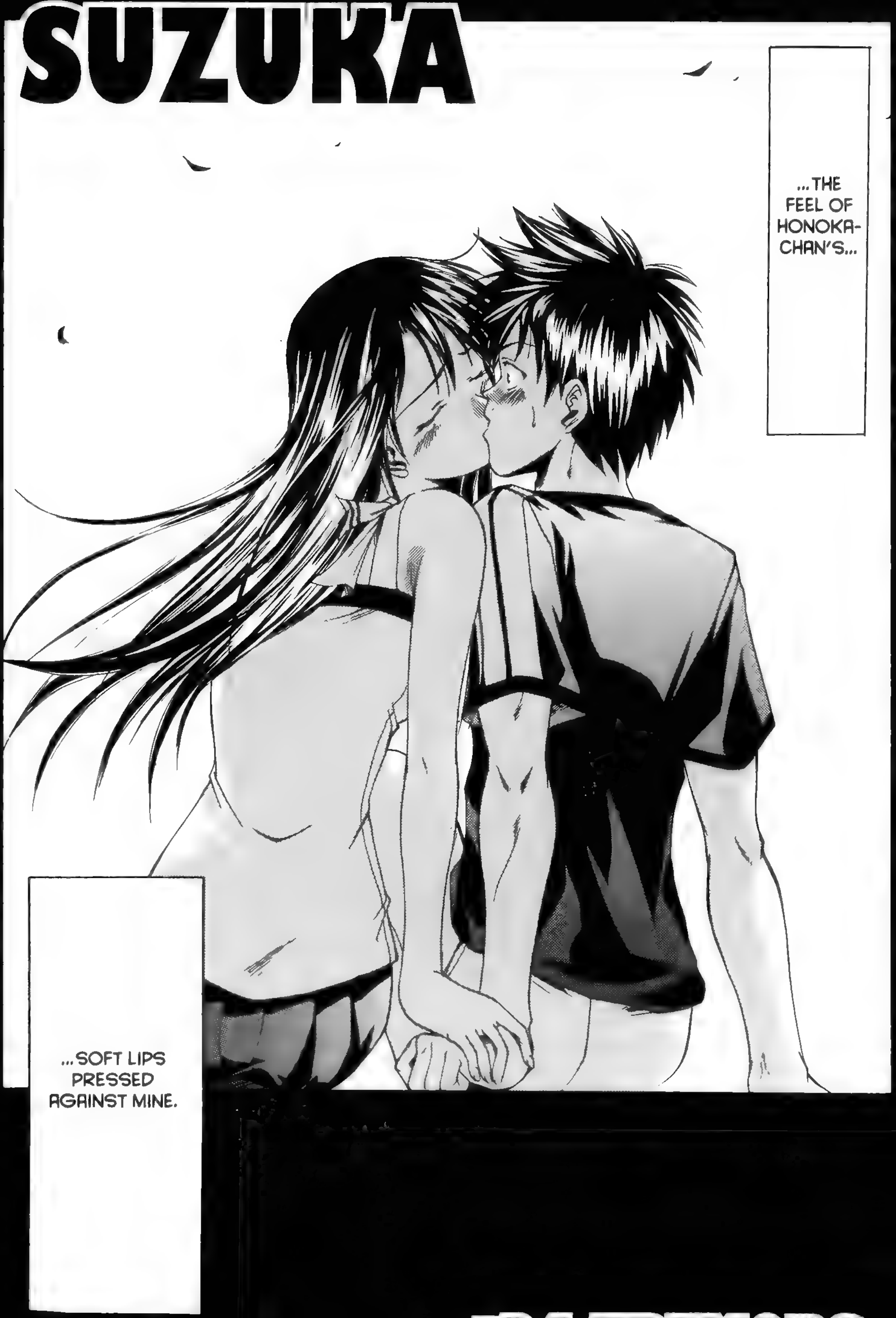
SUZUKA FOUR-PANEL THEATER NUMBER EIGHTEEN

MANGA CRIT

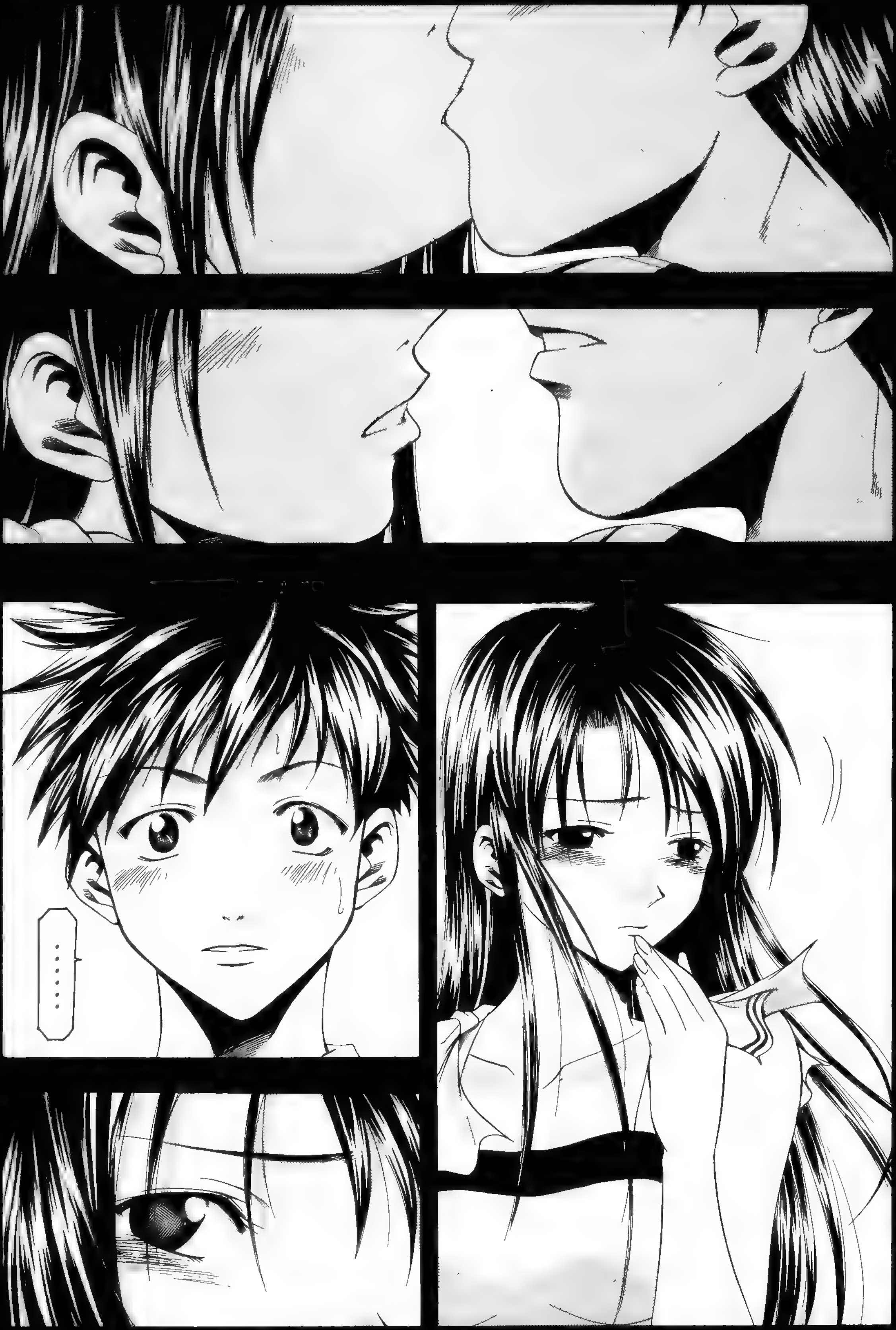

A JOURNALIST CAME TO INTERVIEW ME FOR AN ARTICLE HE WAS DOING CALLED "THE WAY OF MANGA."
SO...
SO...I DEFINITELY DO KEEP THAT IN MIND.
WOW, SEO-SAN REALLY THINKS ABOUT WHAT HE DRAWS.
EDITOR S-KI-SAN (29)
THE FOLLOWING DAY...
THE ENDING IS WAY DIFFERENT...
...FROM WHAT WE TALKED ABOUT IN THE MEETING.
YEAH.
AND IT'S BORING, TOO.
BUT THERE'S GOTTA BE SOME DEEP HIDDEN MEANING TO THIS!
SEO-SAN THINKS REALLY HARD ABOUT HIS STORIES.
HE MUST BE SETTING SOMETHING UP.
OH YEAH, I FORGOT ALL ABOUT THE ENDING WE CAME UP WITH IN THAT MEETING.
WHAT?
ガビ！
SHOCK
OOPS.

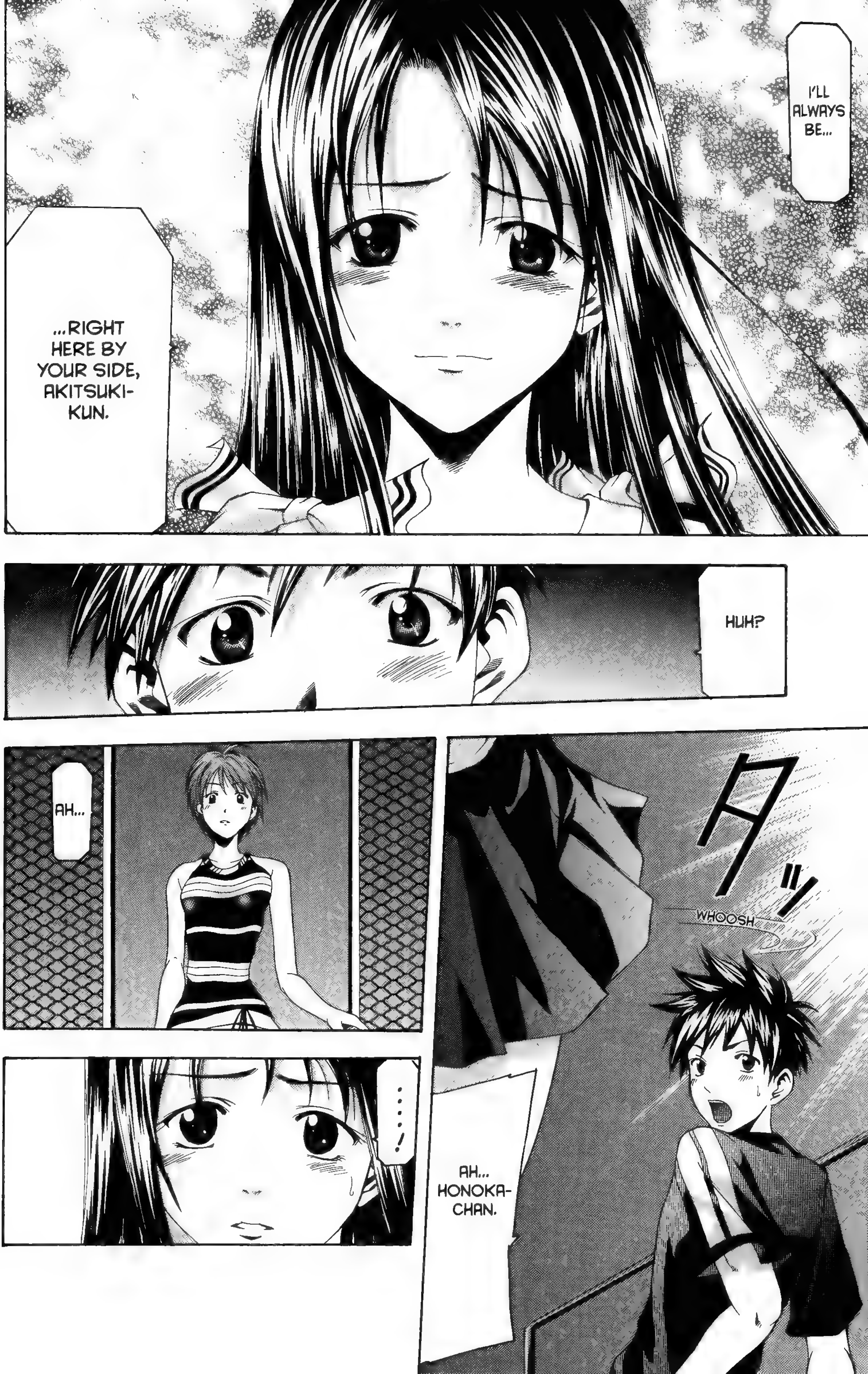

FOR A MOMENT...
I HAD NO IDEA WHAT THE HELL WAS HAPPENING.
ザワ
HYUU
ザワ
HYUU
THE ONLY THING I REMEMBER IS...

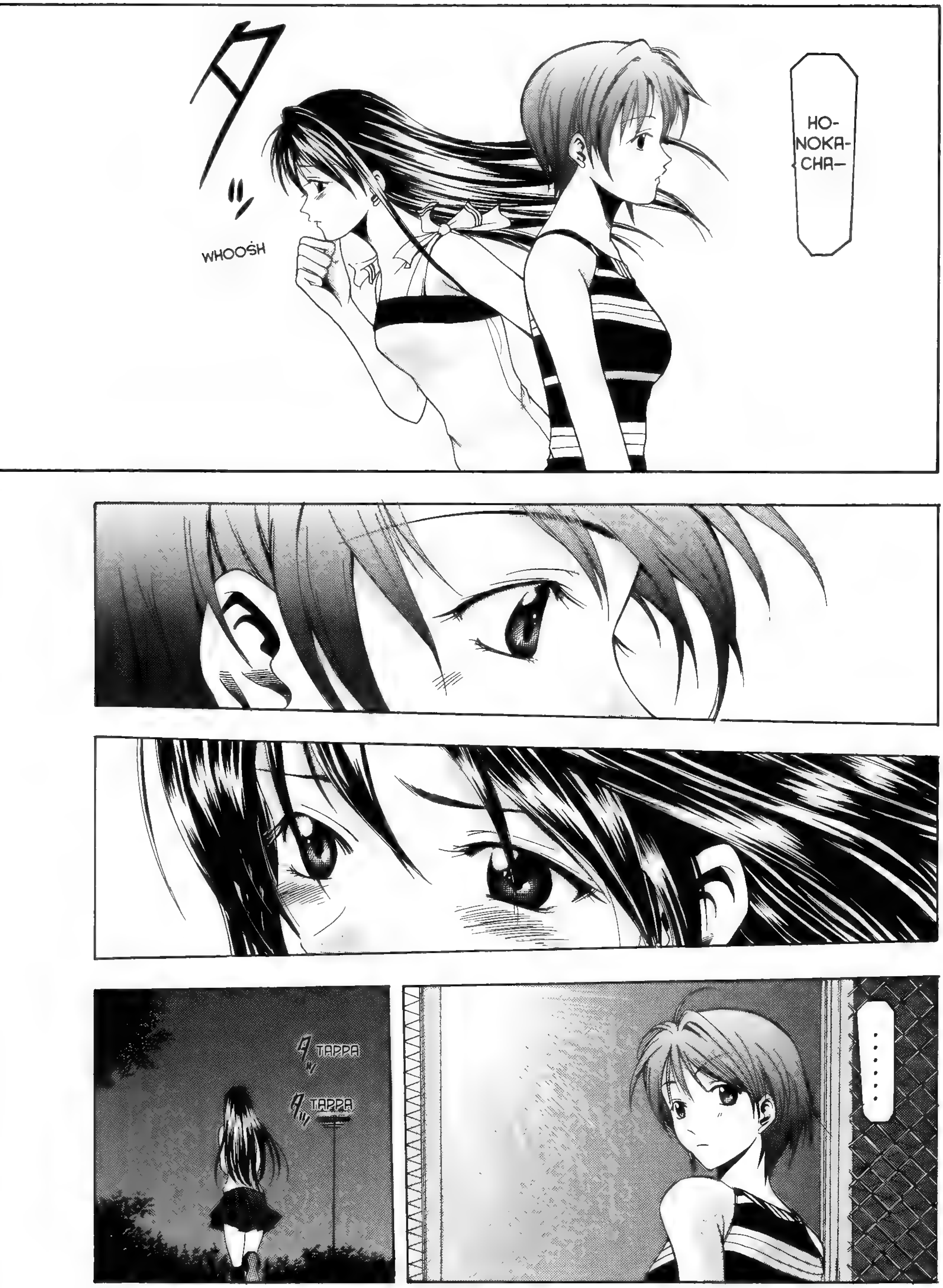
SUZUKA

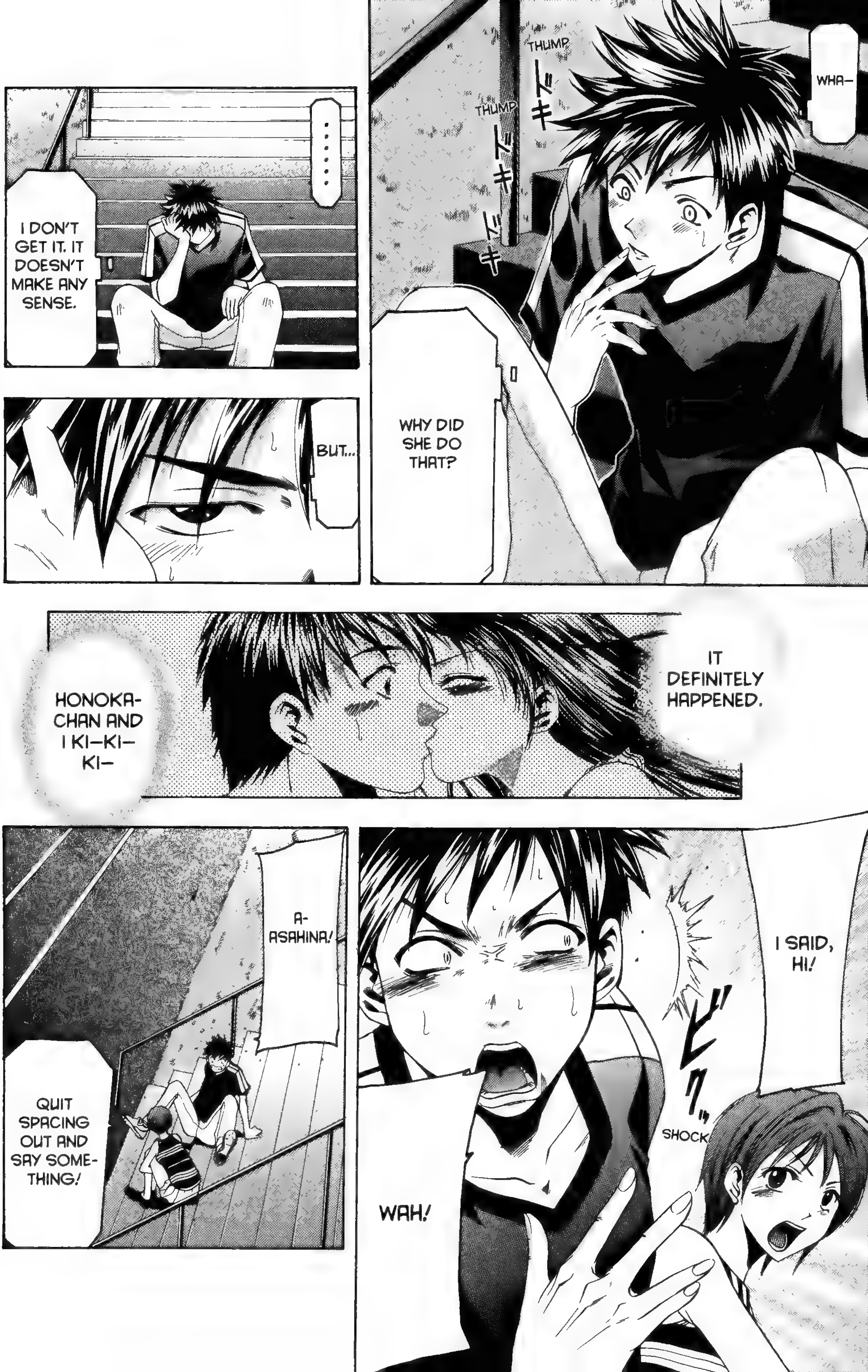

...THE FEEL OF HONOKA-CHAN'S...
...SOFT LIPS PRESSED AGAINST MINE.

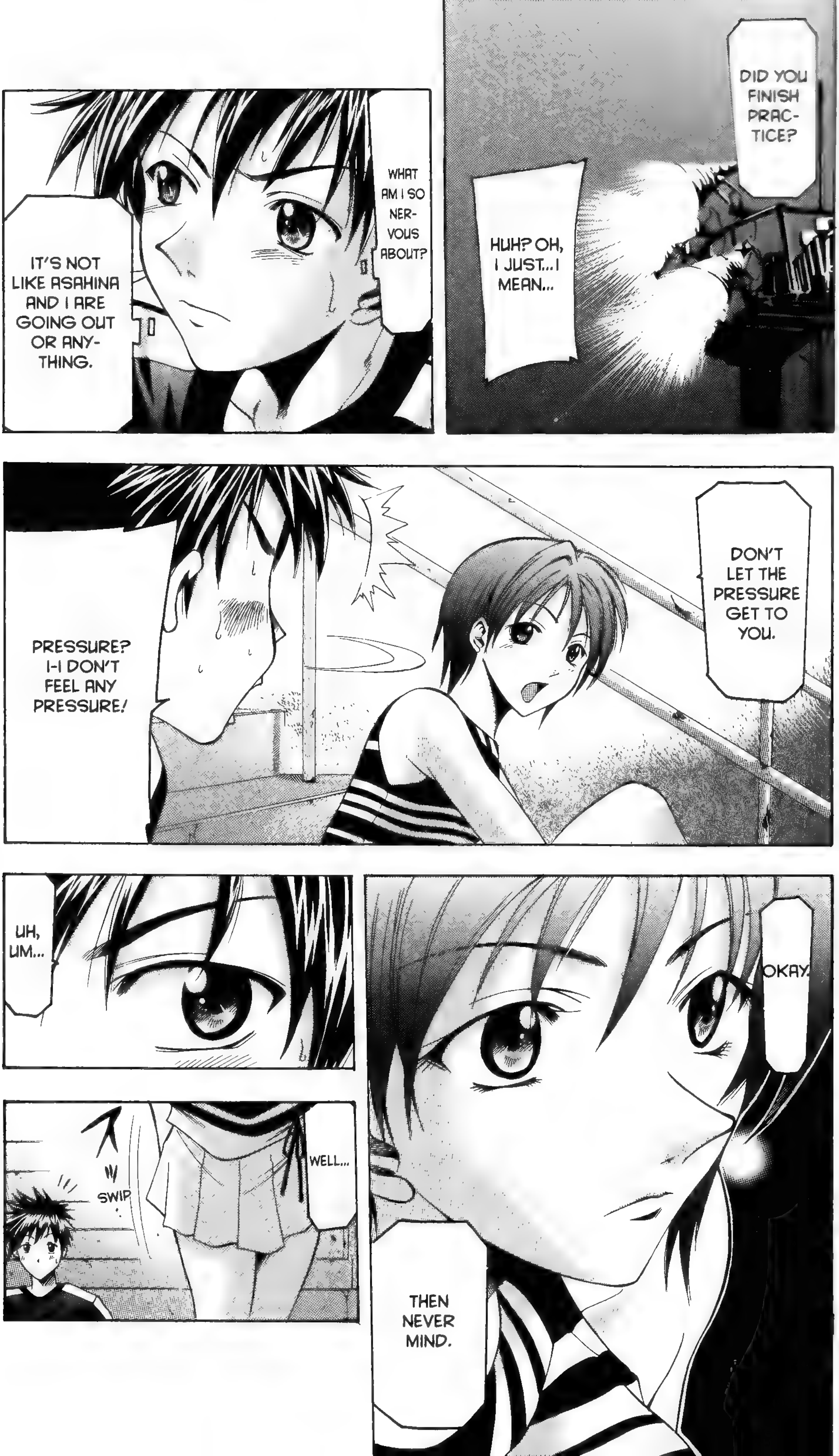
#34 TREMORS

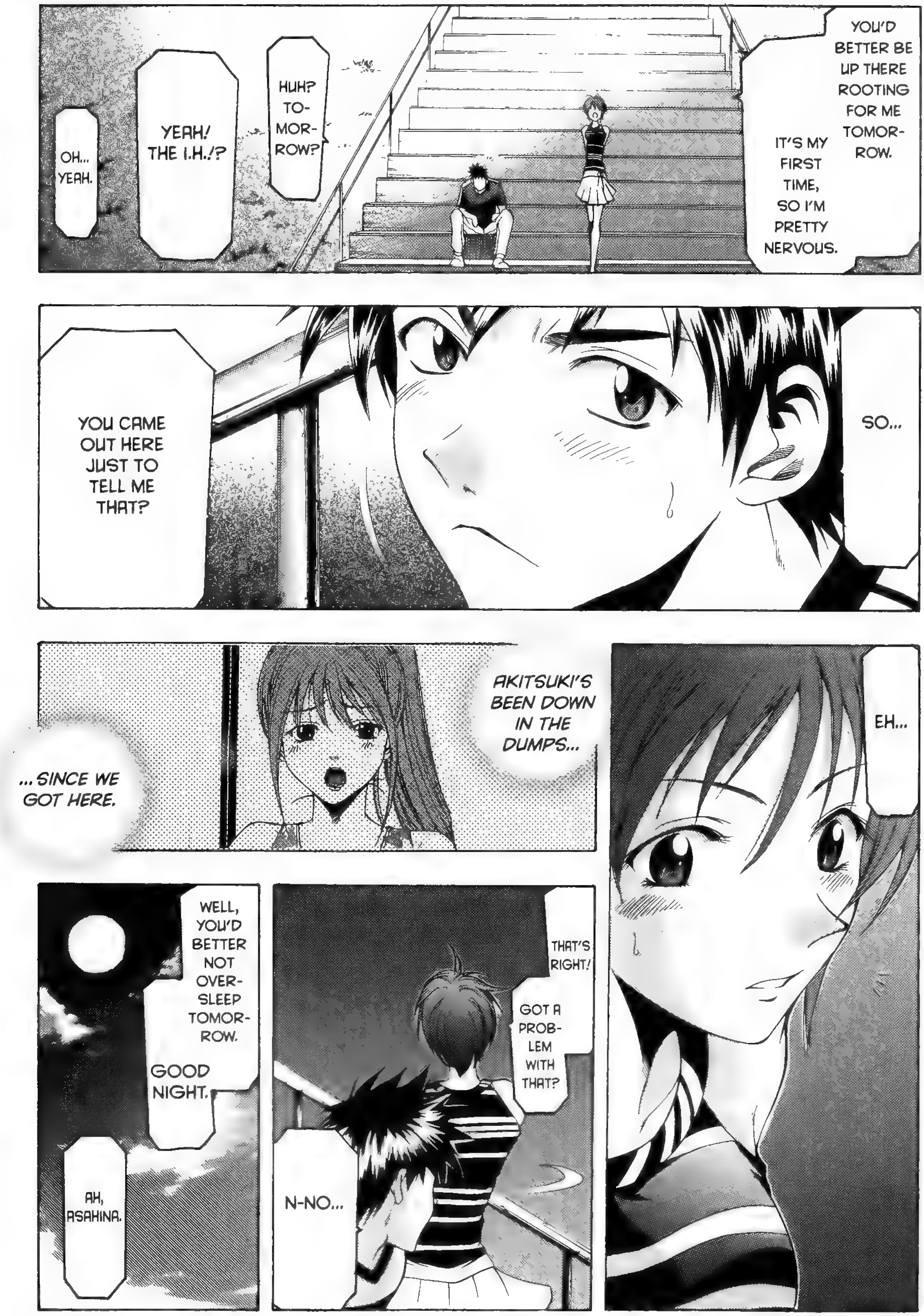


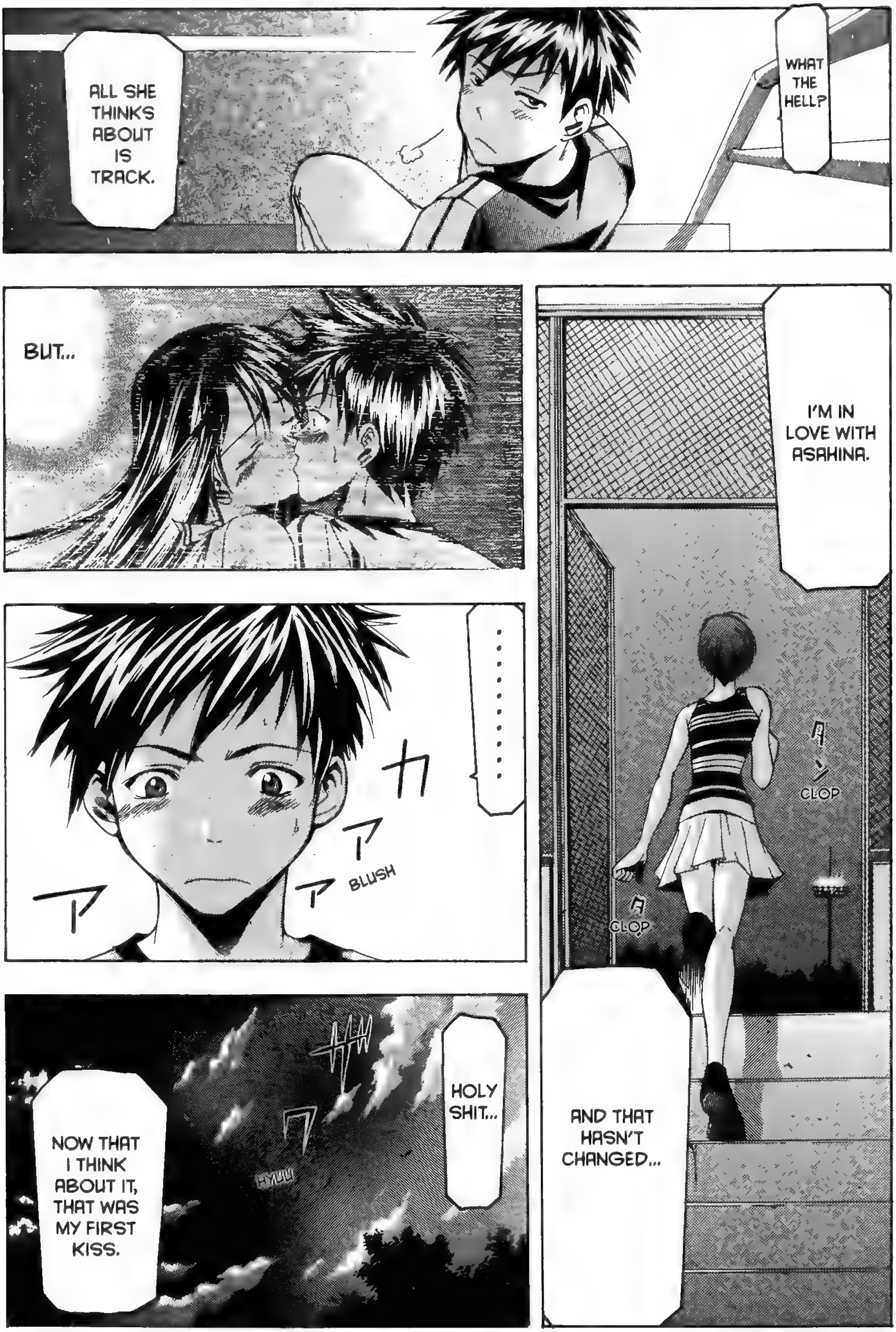

I'LL ALWAYS BE...
...RIGHT HERE BY YOUR SIDE, AKITSUKI-KUN.
HUH?
WHOOSH
AH... HONOKA-CHAN.
AH...
....!

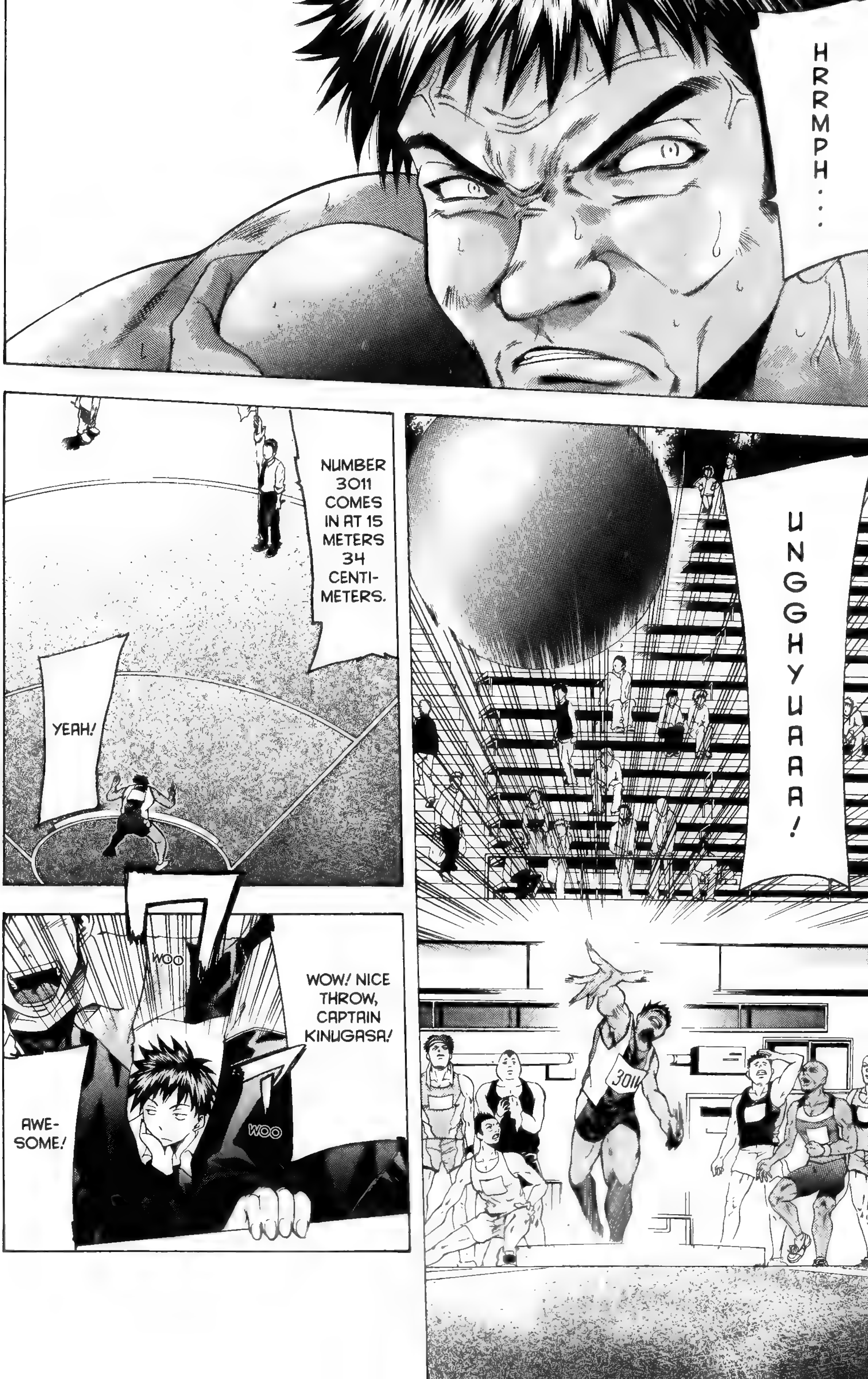

HO-NOKA-CHA—
タッ
WHOOSH
......
タッ TAPPA
タッ TAPPA

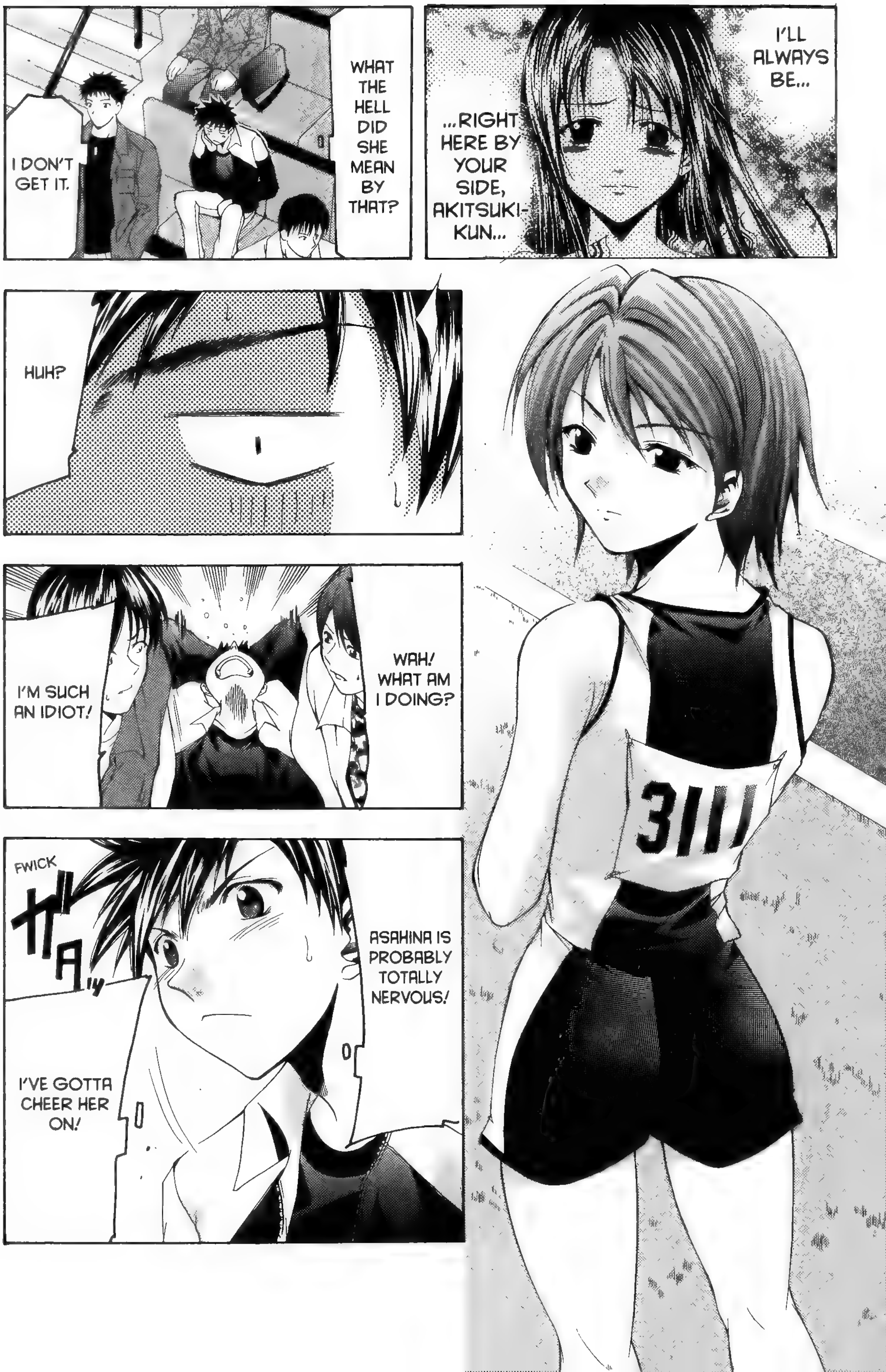

WHA–
THUMP
ドキ
THUMP
ドキ
ドキ
WHY DID SHE DO THAT?
......
I DON'T GET IT. IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE.
BUT...
IT DEFINITELY HAPPENED.
HONOKA-CHAN AND I KI–KI–KI–
I SAID, HI!
ビクッ
SHOCK
WAH!
A-ASAHINA!
QUIT SPACING OUT AND SAY SOMETHING!

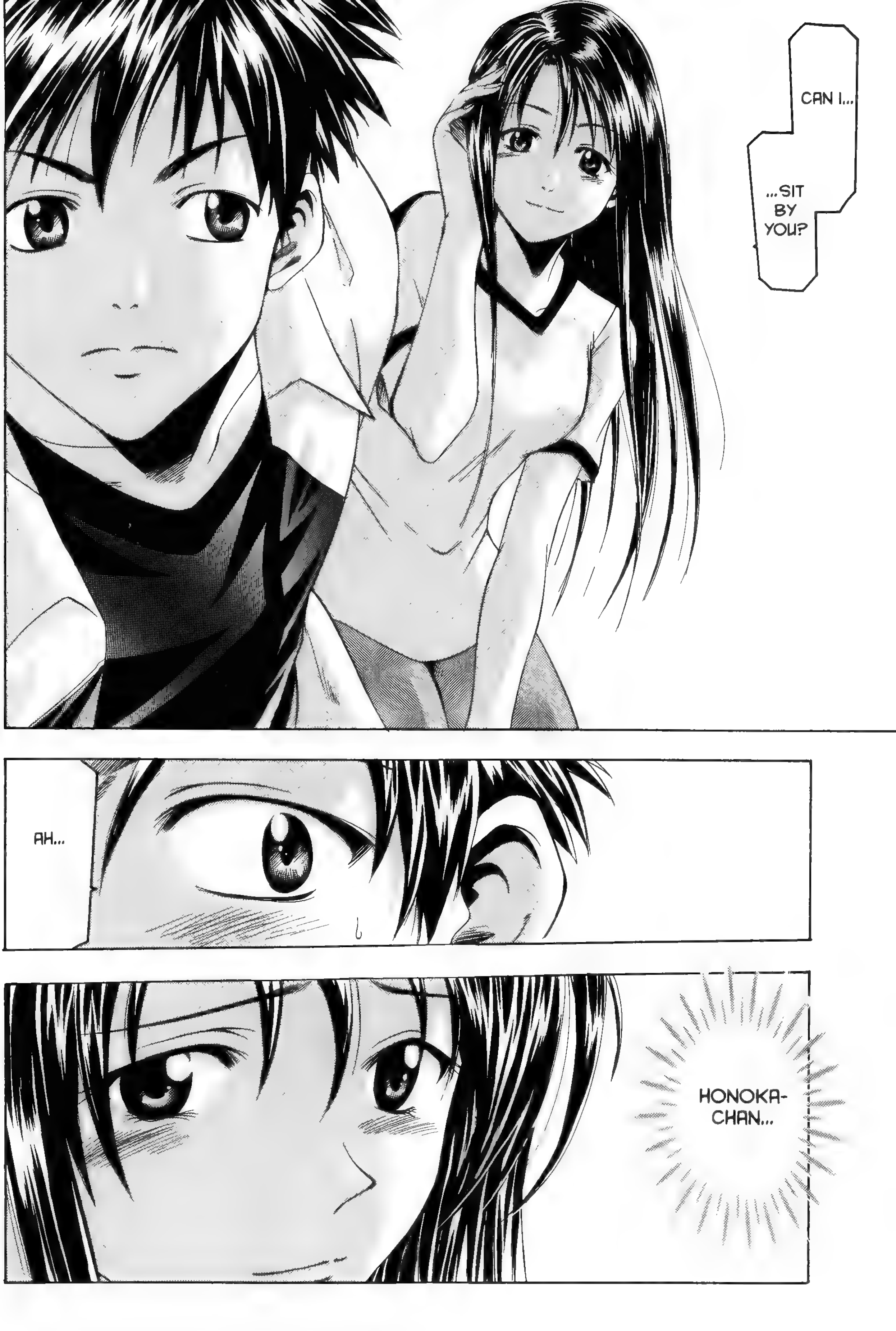

DID YOU FINISH PRACTICE?
HUH? OH, I JUST...I MEAN...
WHAT AM I SO NERVOUS ABOUT?
IT'S NOT LIKE ASAHINA AND I ARE GOING OUT OR ANYTHING.
DON'T LET THE PRESSURE GET TO YOU.
PRESSURE? I-I DON'T FEEL ANY PRESSURE!
OKAY.
UH, UM...
WELL...
THEN NEVER MIND.
SWIP

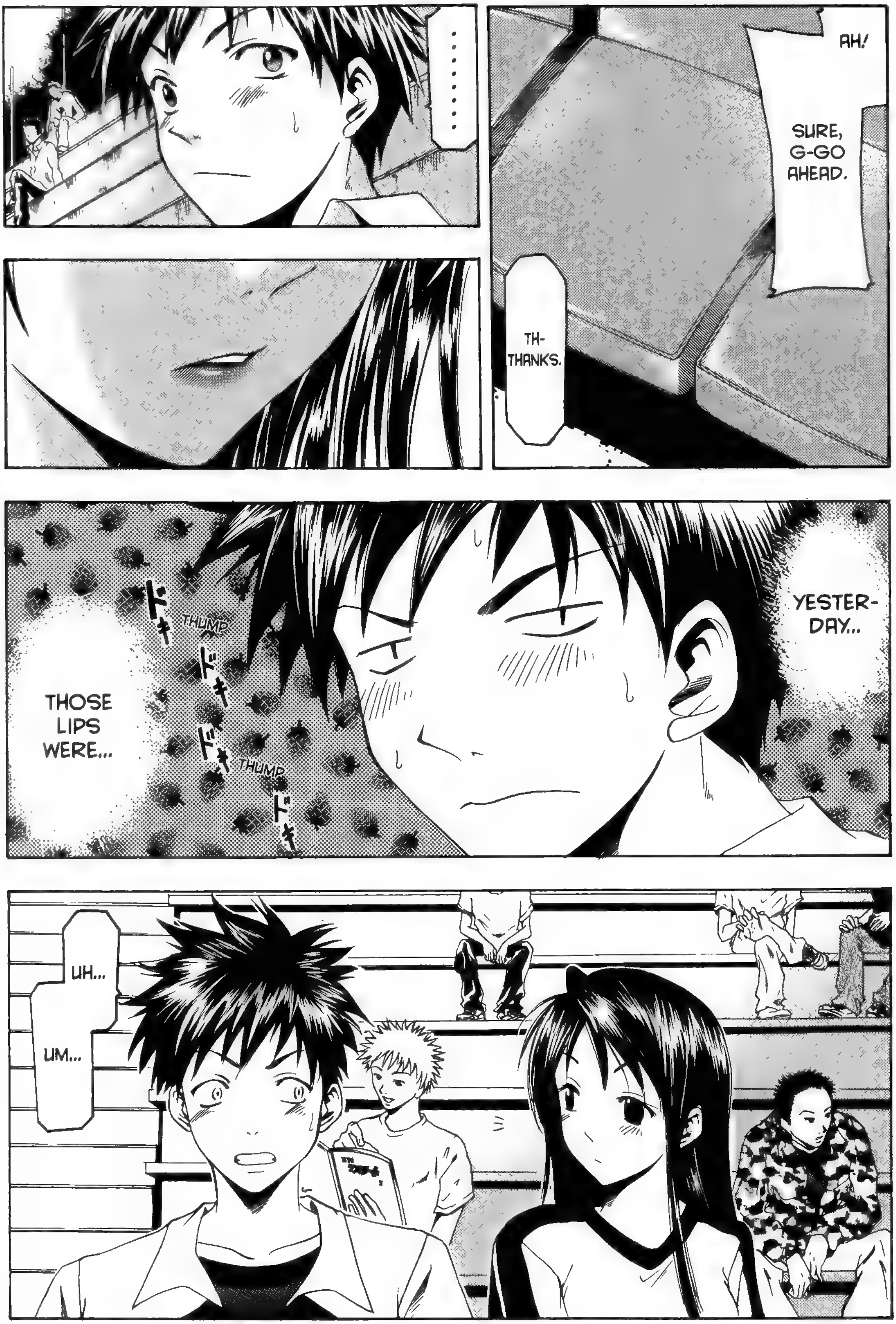

YOU'D BETTER BE UP THERE ROOTING FOR ME TOMORROW.
IT'S MY FIRST TIME, SO I'M PRETTY NERVOUS.
HUH? TOMORROW?
YEAH! THE I.H./?
OH... YEAH.
SO...
YOU CAME OUT HERE JUST TO TELL ME THAT?
EH...
AKITSUKI'S BEEN DOWN IN THE DUMPS...
...SINCE WE GOT HERE.
THAT'S RIGHT!
GOT A PROBLEM WITH THAT?
N-NO...
WELL, YOU'D BETTER NOT OVERSLEEP TOMORROW.
GOOD NIGHT.
AH, ASAHINA.

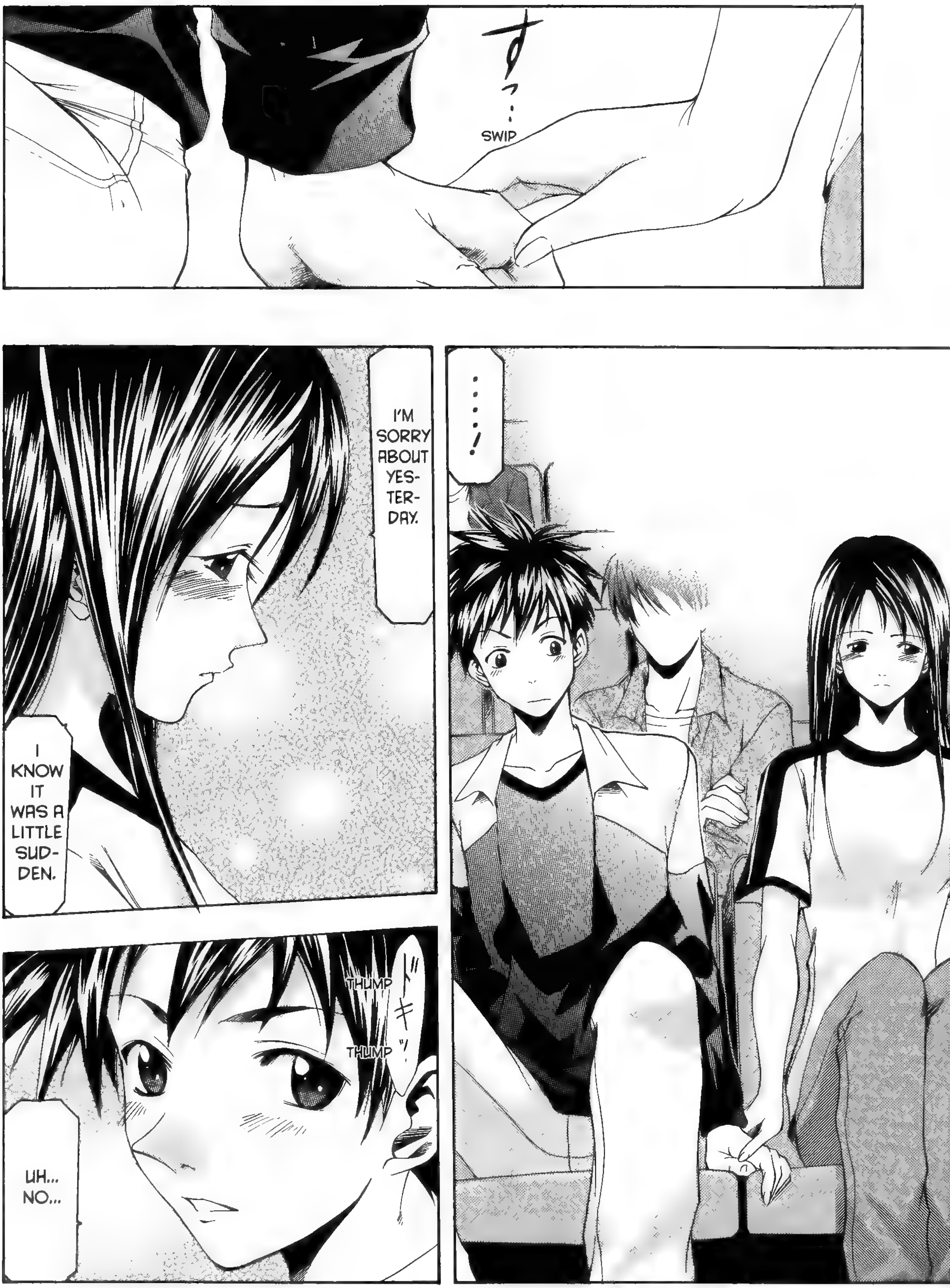

WHAT THE HELL?
ALL SHE THINKS ABOUT IS TRACK.
I'M IN LOVE WITH ASAHINA.
CLOP
CLOP
AND THAT HASN'T CHANGED...
BUT...
....
BLUSH
HOLY SHIT...
HYUUU
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, THAT WAS MY FIRST KISS.

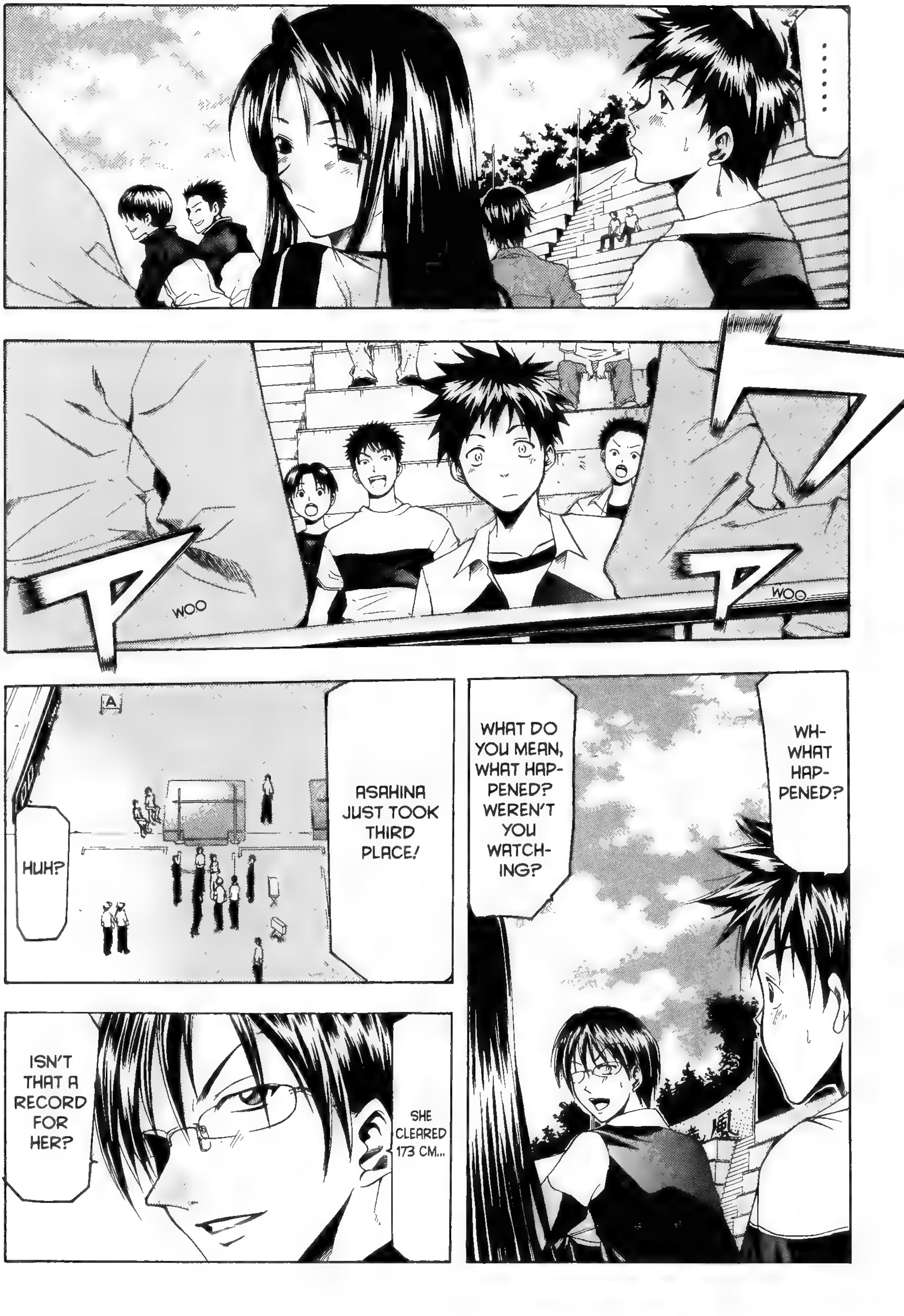

HRRMPH...
UNGGHYUAAA!
NUMBER 3011 COMES IN AT 15 METERS 34 CENTIMETERS.
YEAH!
3011
WOW! NICE THROW, CAPTAIN KINUGASA!
WOO
WOO
AWESOME!

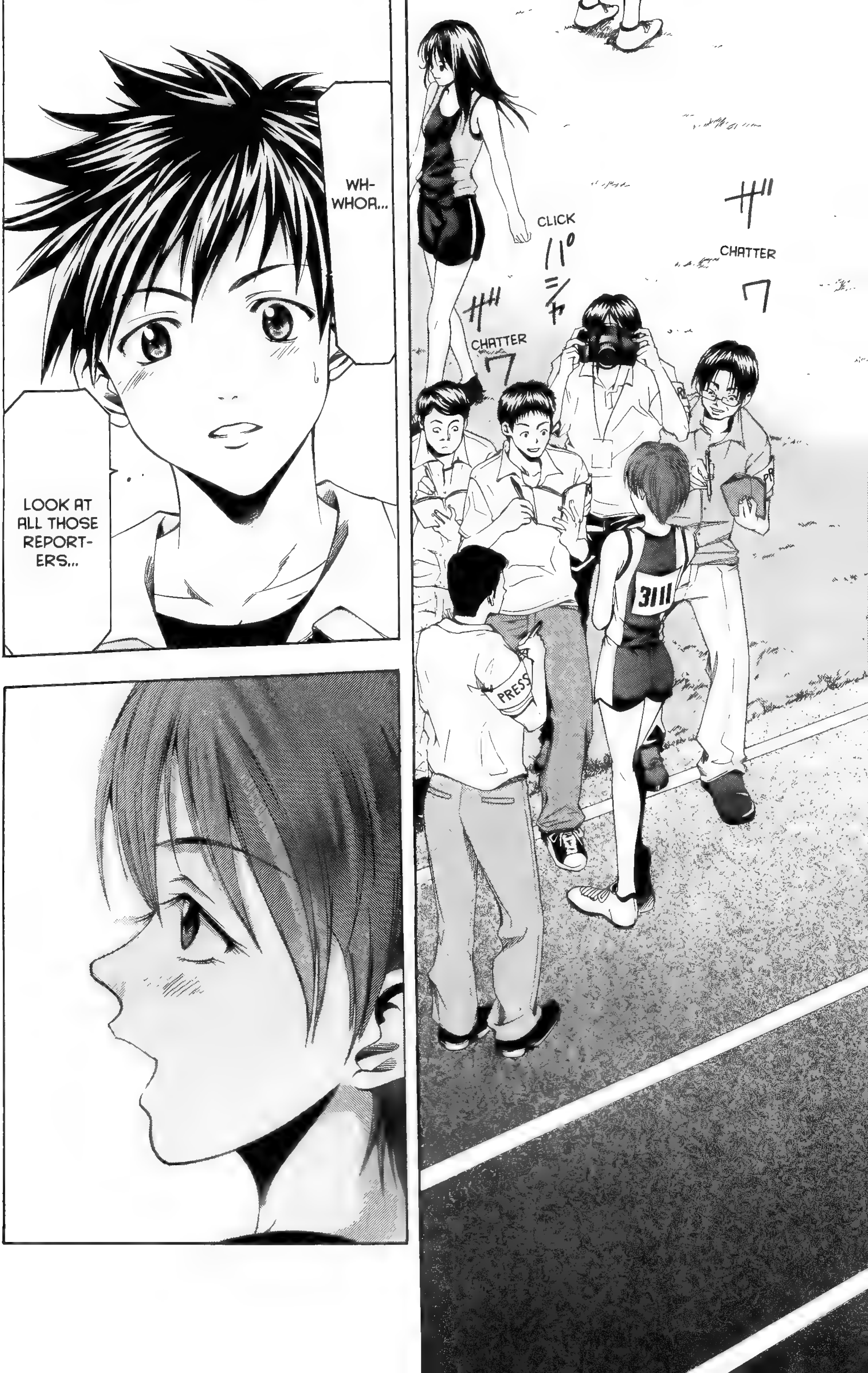

I'LL ALWAYS BE...
...RIGHT HERE BY YOUR SIDE, AKITSUKI-KUN...
WHAT THE HELL DID SHE MEAN BY THAT?
I DON'T GET IT.
HUH?
WAH! WHAT AM I DOING?
I'M SUCH AN IDIOT!
FWICK
ASAHINA IS PROBABLY TOTALLY NERVOUS!
I'VE GOTTA CHEER HER ON!
3111

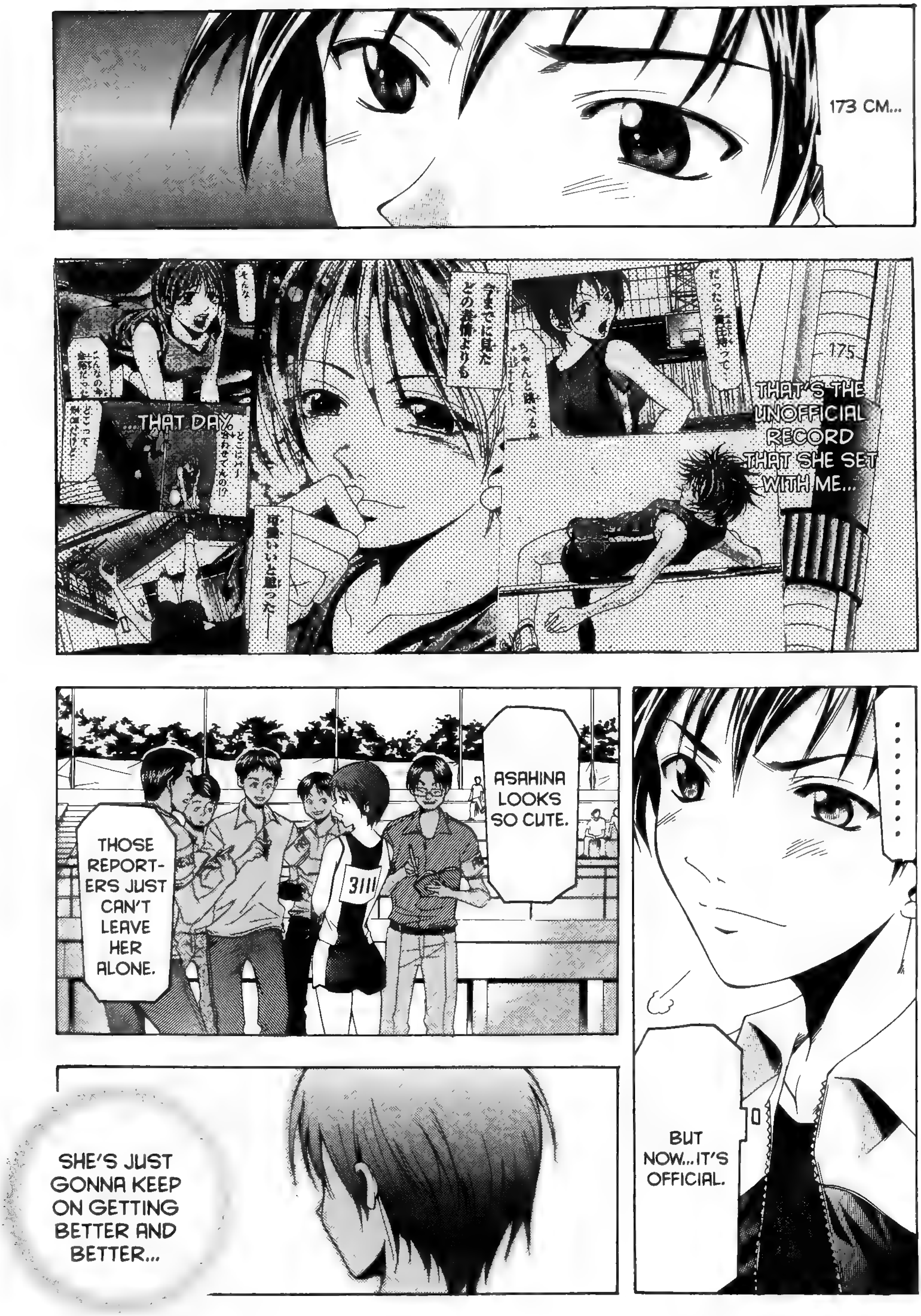

CAN I...
...SIT BY YOU?
AH...
HONOKA-CHAN...

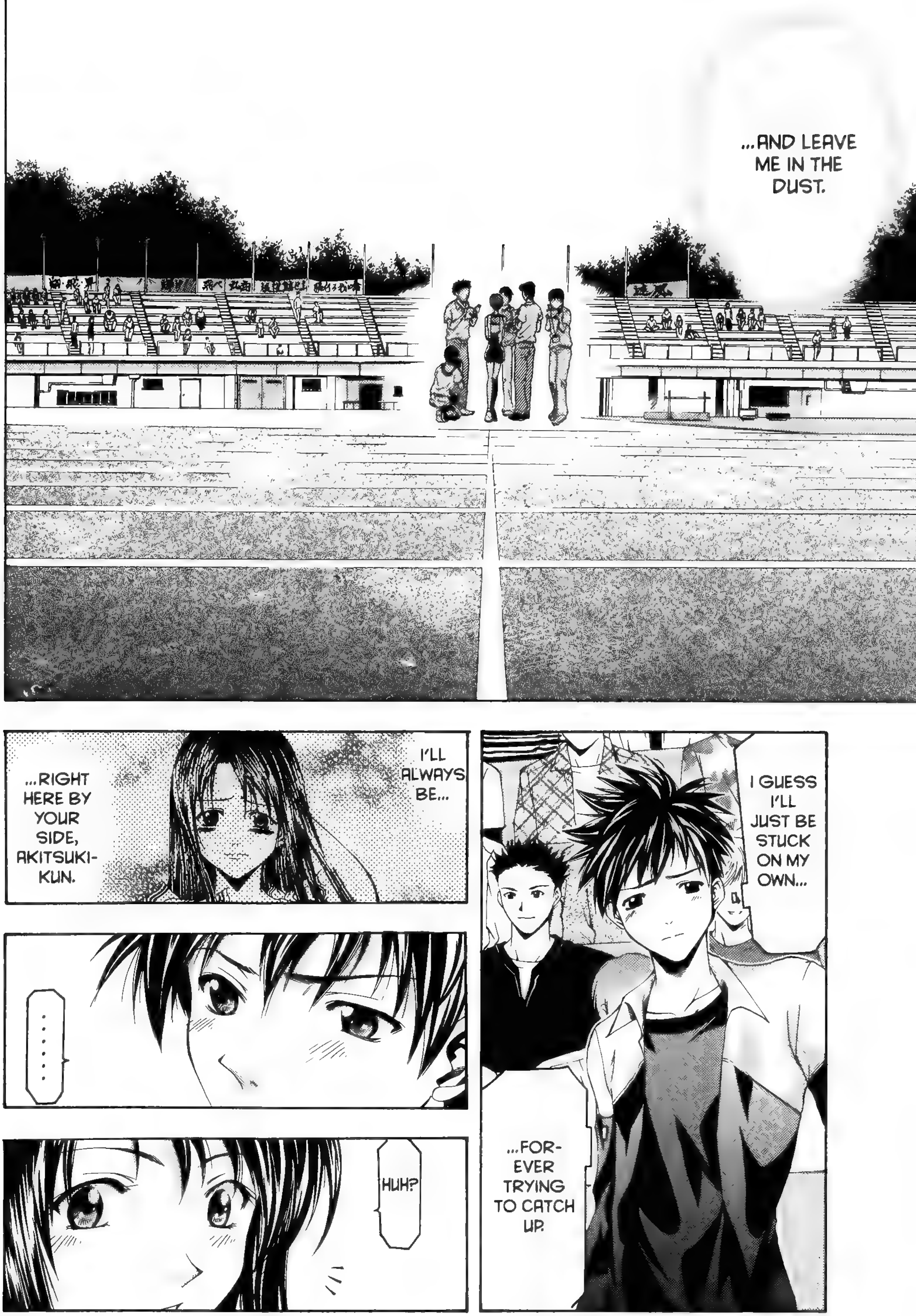

AH!
SURE, G-GO AHEAD.
TH-THANKS.
……
YESTERDAY...
ドキ THUMP ドキ
ドキ THUMP ドキ
THOSE LIPS WERE...
UH...
UM...

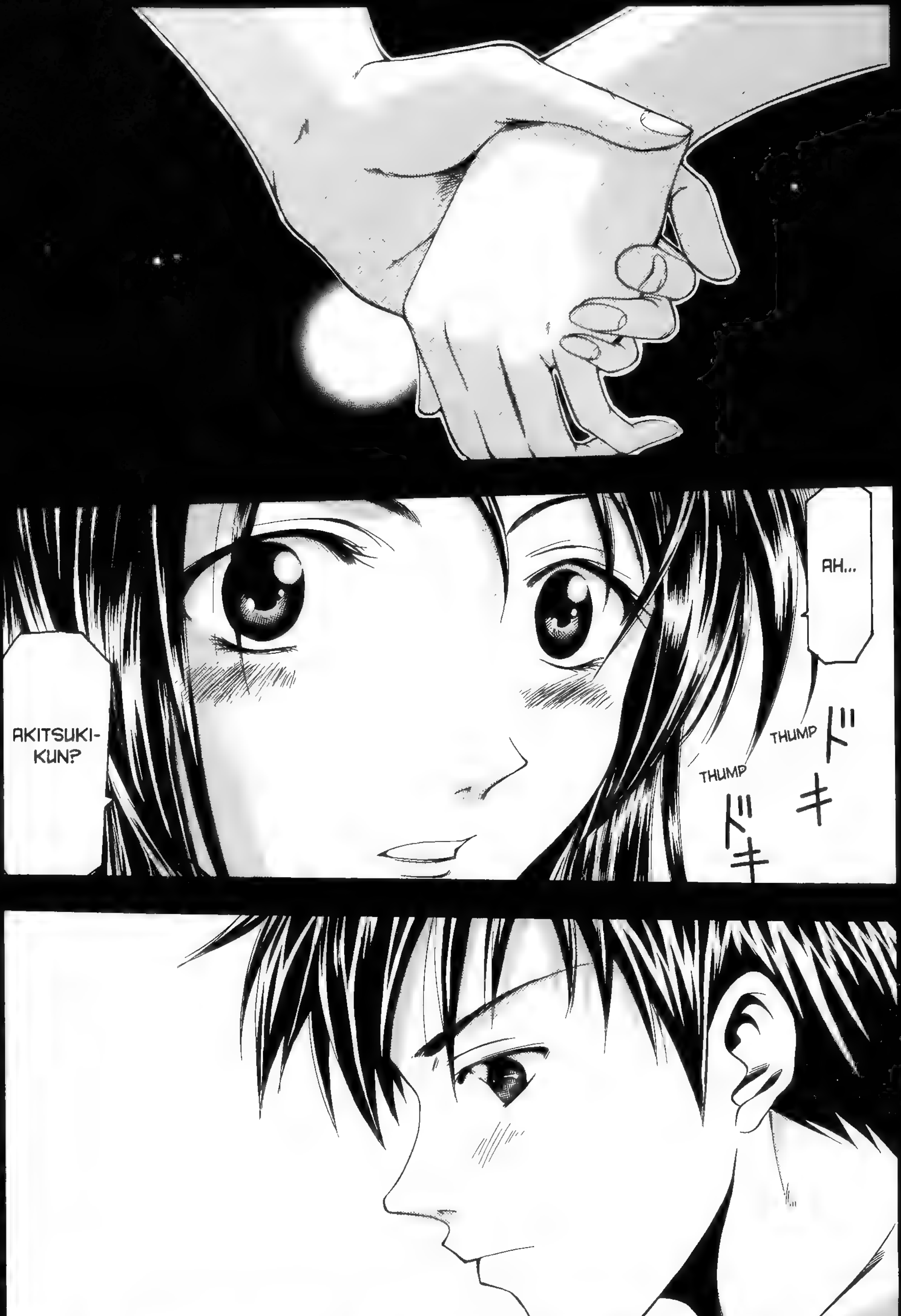

すっ…
SWIP
…!
I'M SORRY ABOUT YESTERDAY.
I KNOW IT WAS A LITTLE SUDDEN.
ドキッ
THUMP
THUMP
UH... NO...


……
WOO
WOO
WH-WHAT HAPPENED?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, WHAT HAPPENED? WEREN'T YOU WATCHING?
ASAHINA JUST TOOK THIRD PLACE!
HUH?
A
SHE CLEARED 173 CM...
ISN'T THAT A RECORD FOR HER?


ザ
CHATTER
ワ
CLICK
パシャ
ザ
CHATTER
ワ
PRESS
3111
WH-WHOA...
LOOK AT ALL THOSE REPORTERS...

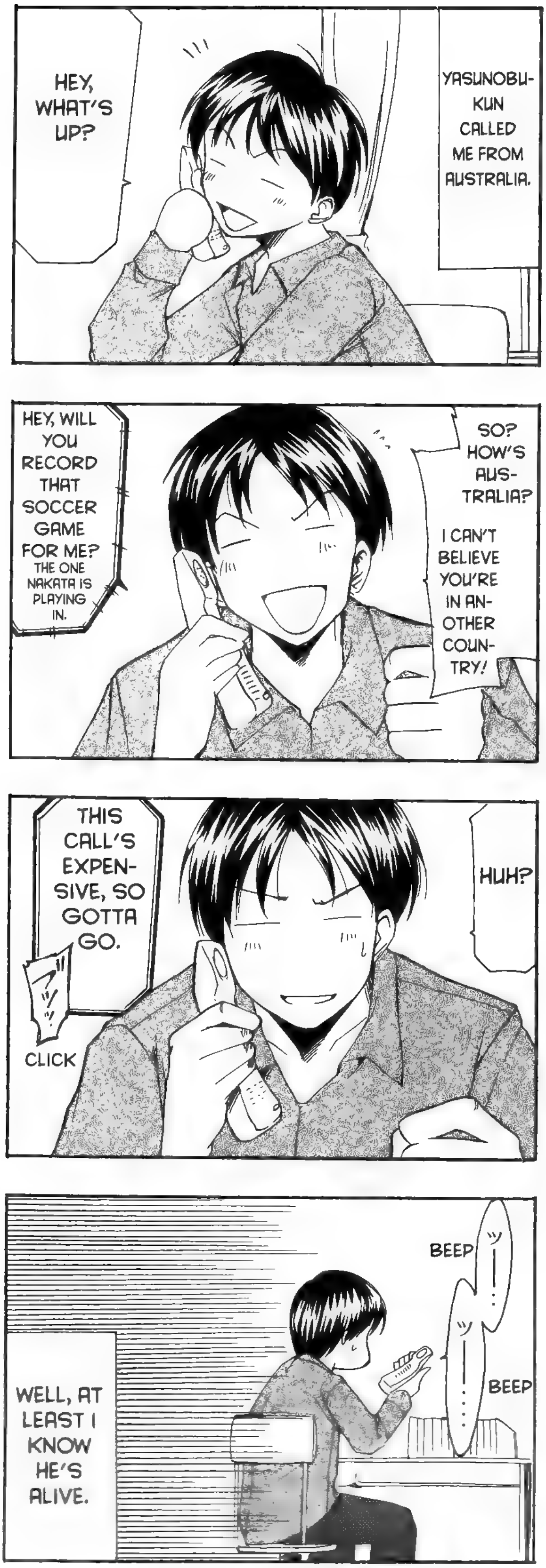

173 CM...
だったら責任持って
ちゃんと跳べるか
175
THAT'S THE UNOFFICIAL RECORD THAT SHE SET WITH ME...
今までに見たどの表情よりも
可愛いと思った—
そんな…
どこに目合わせてんの!?
...THAT DAY.
BUT NOW...IT'S OFFICIAL.
ASAHINA LOOKS SO CUTE.
3111
THOSE REPORTERS JUST CAN'T LEAVE HER ALONE.
SHE'S JUST GONNA KEEP ON GETTING BETTER AND BETTER...

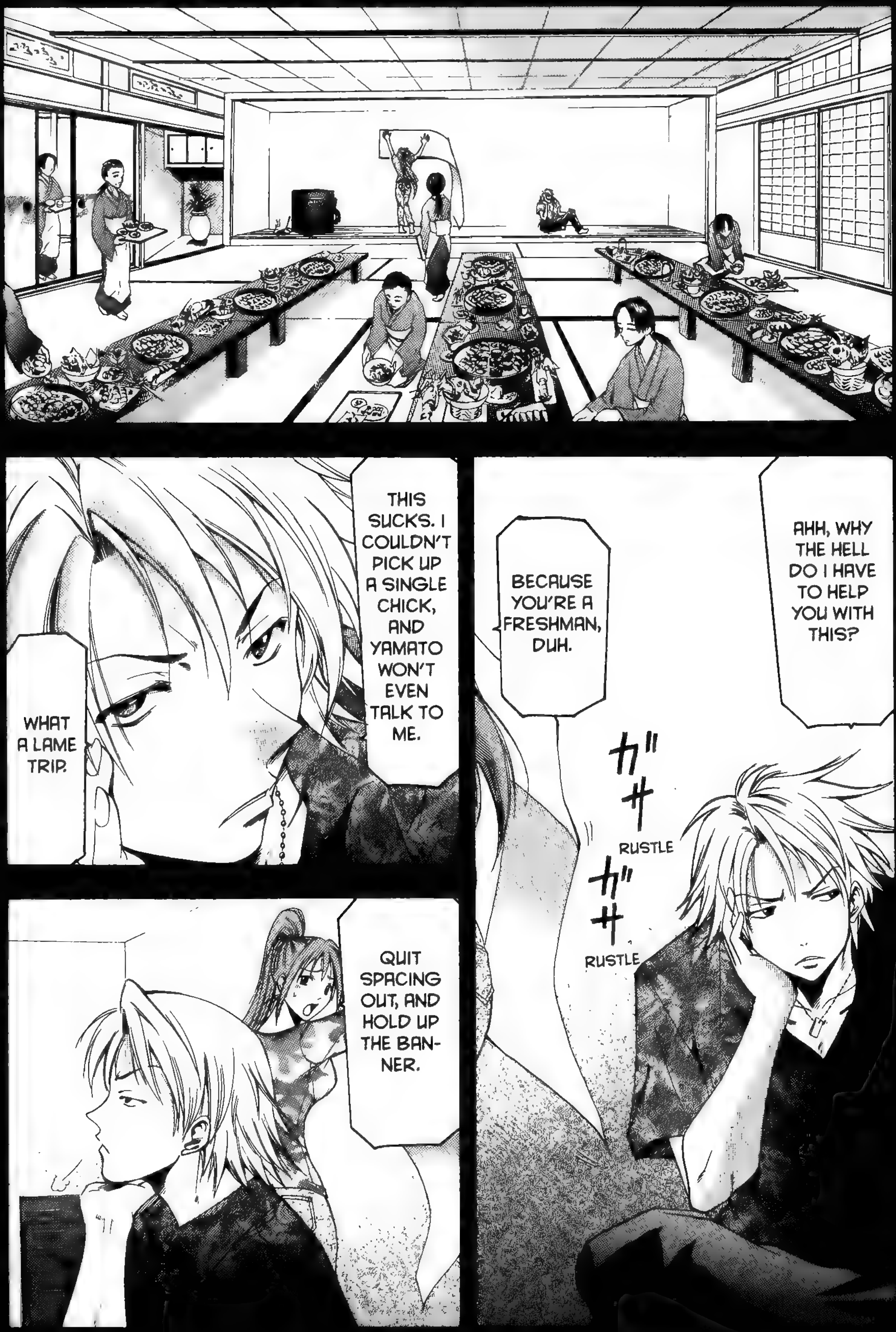

...AND LEAVE ME IN THE DUST.
I GUESS I'LL JUST BE STUCK ON MY OWN...
...FOREVER TRYING TO CATCH UP.
I'LL ALWAYS BE...
...RIGHT HERE BY YOUR SIDE, AKITSUKI-KUN.
......
HUH?

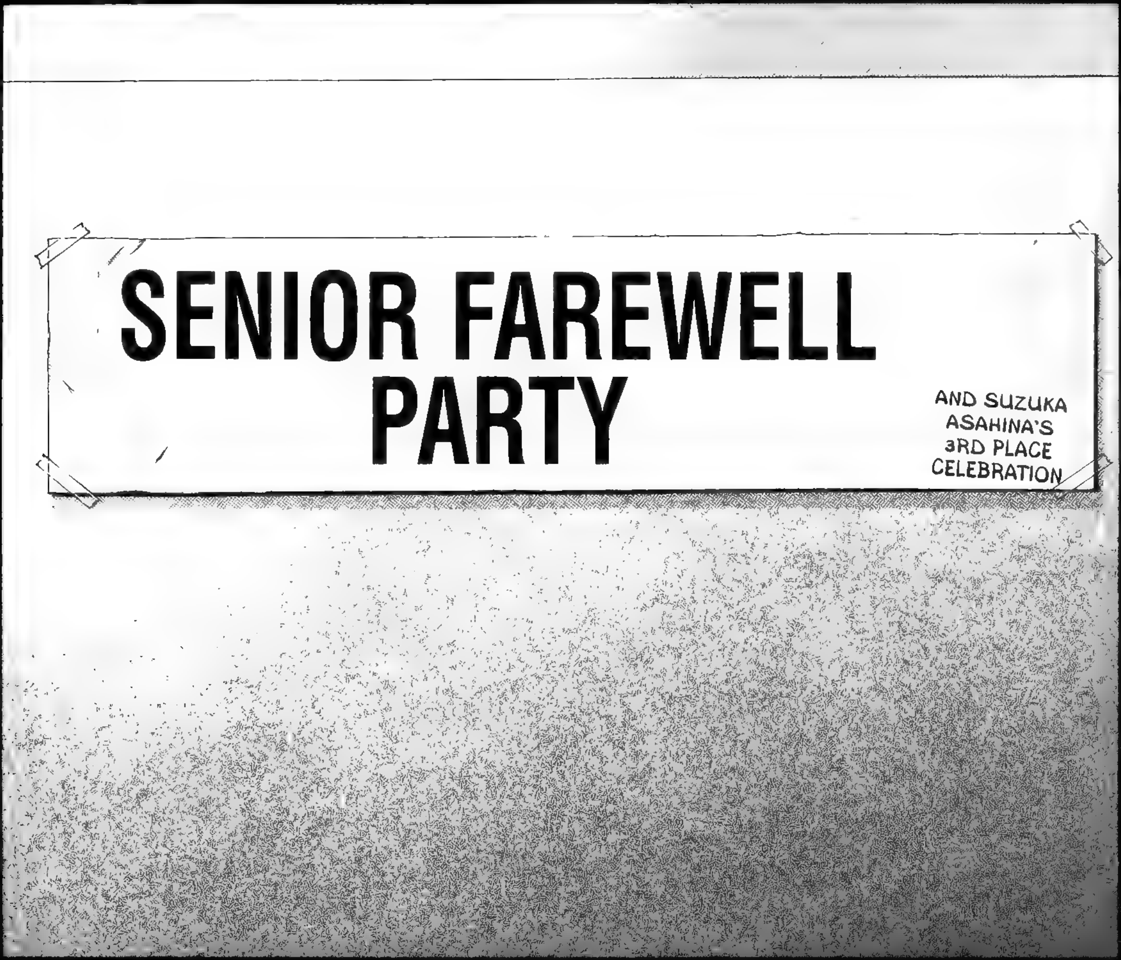

AH...
ドキ
THUMP
ドキ
THUMP
AKITSUKI-KUN?

SUZUKA FOUR-PANEL THEATER NUMBER NINETEEN

IS THAT ALL?

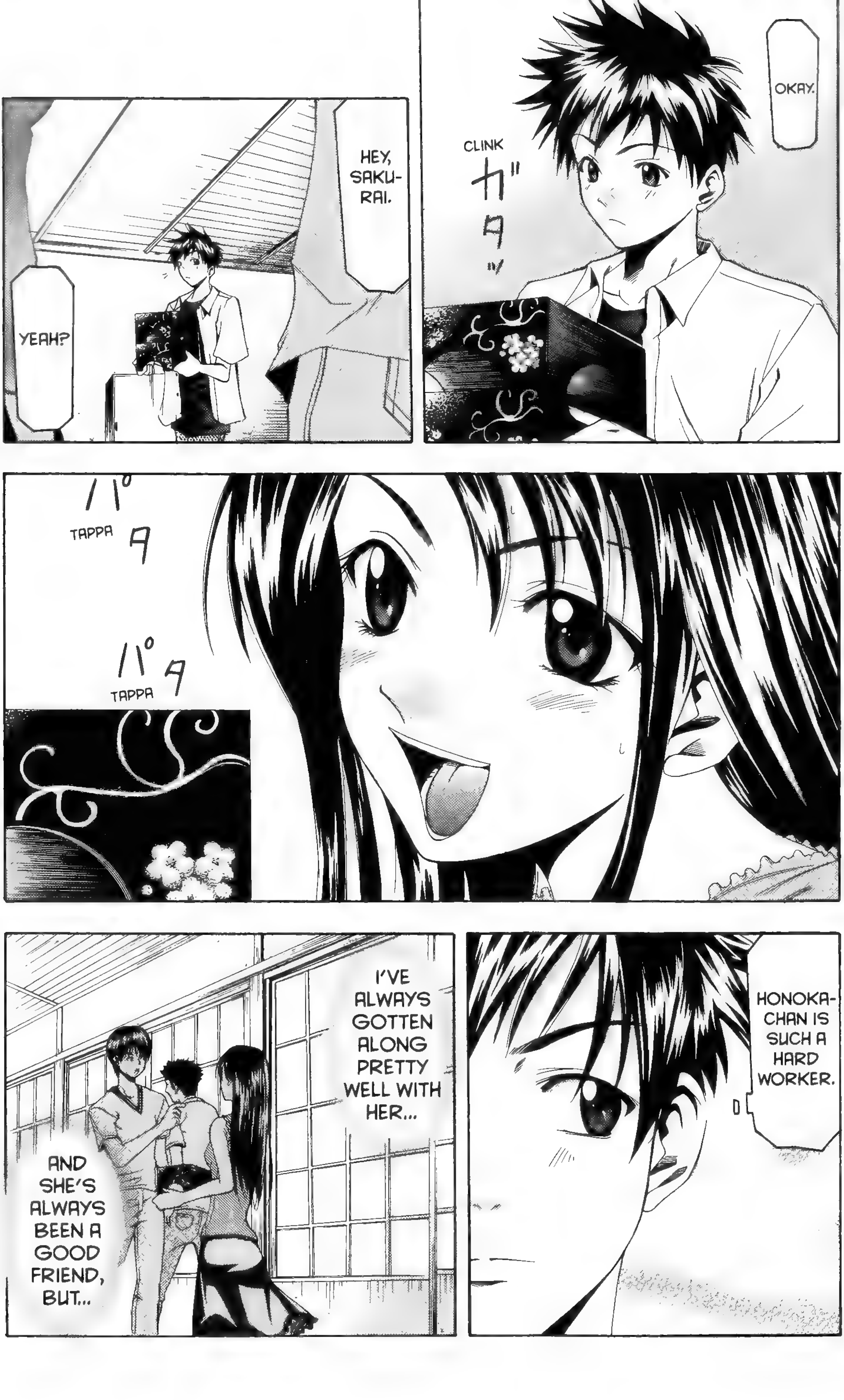

YASUNOBU-KUN CALLED ME FROM AUSTRALIA.
HEY, WHAT'S UP?
SO? HOW'S AUSTRALIA?
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE IN ANOTHER COUNTRY!
HEY, WILL YOU RECORD THAT SOCCER GAME FOR ME? THE ONE NAKATA IS PLAYING IN.
HUH?
THIS CALL'S EXPENSIVE, SO GOTTA GO.
ブツッ
CLICK
ツー……
BEEP
ツー……
BEEP
WELL, AT LEAST I KNOW HE'S ALIVE.

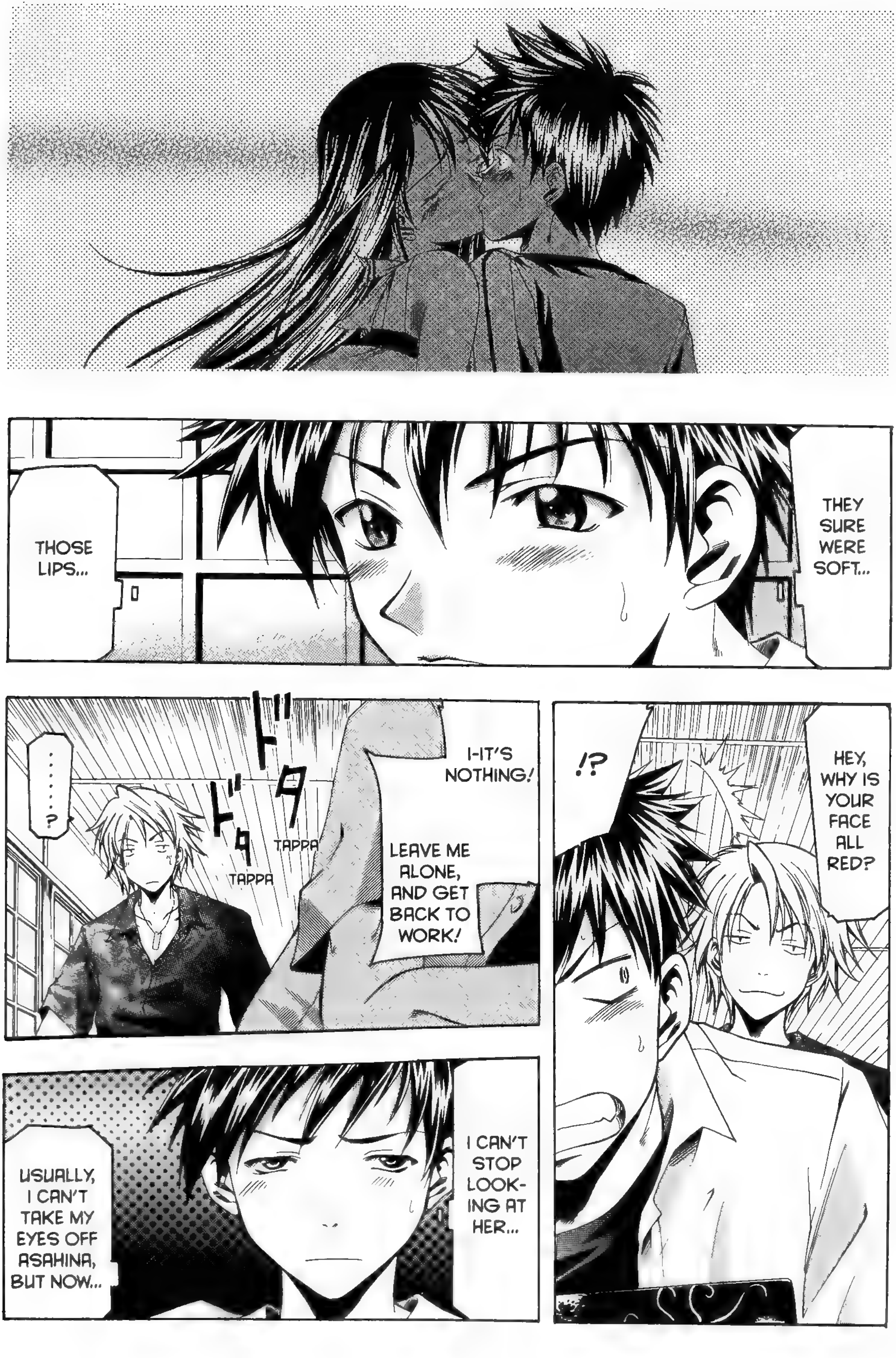

AHH, WHY THE HELL DO I HAVE TO HELP YOU WITH THIS?
BECAUSE YOU'RE A FRESHMAN, DUH.
ガサ
RUSTLE
ガサ
RUSTLE
THIS SUCKS. I COULDN'T PICK UP A SINGLE CHICK, AND YAMATO WON'T EVEN TALK TO ME.
WHAT A LAME TRIP.
QUIT SPACING OUT, AND HOLD UP THE BANNER.

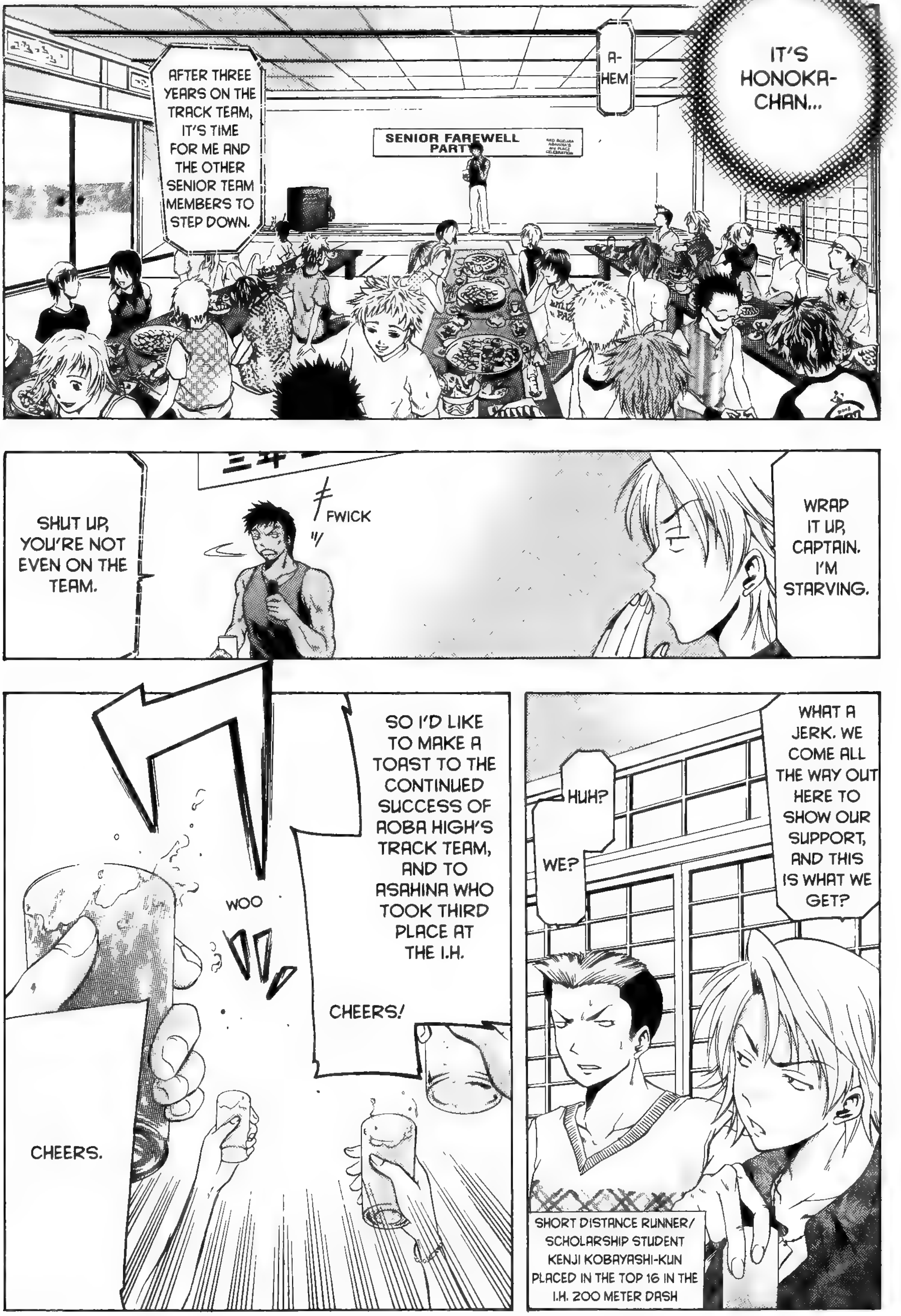

SENIOR FAREWELL PARTY
AND SUZUKA ASAHINA'S 3RD PLACE CELEBRATION

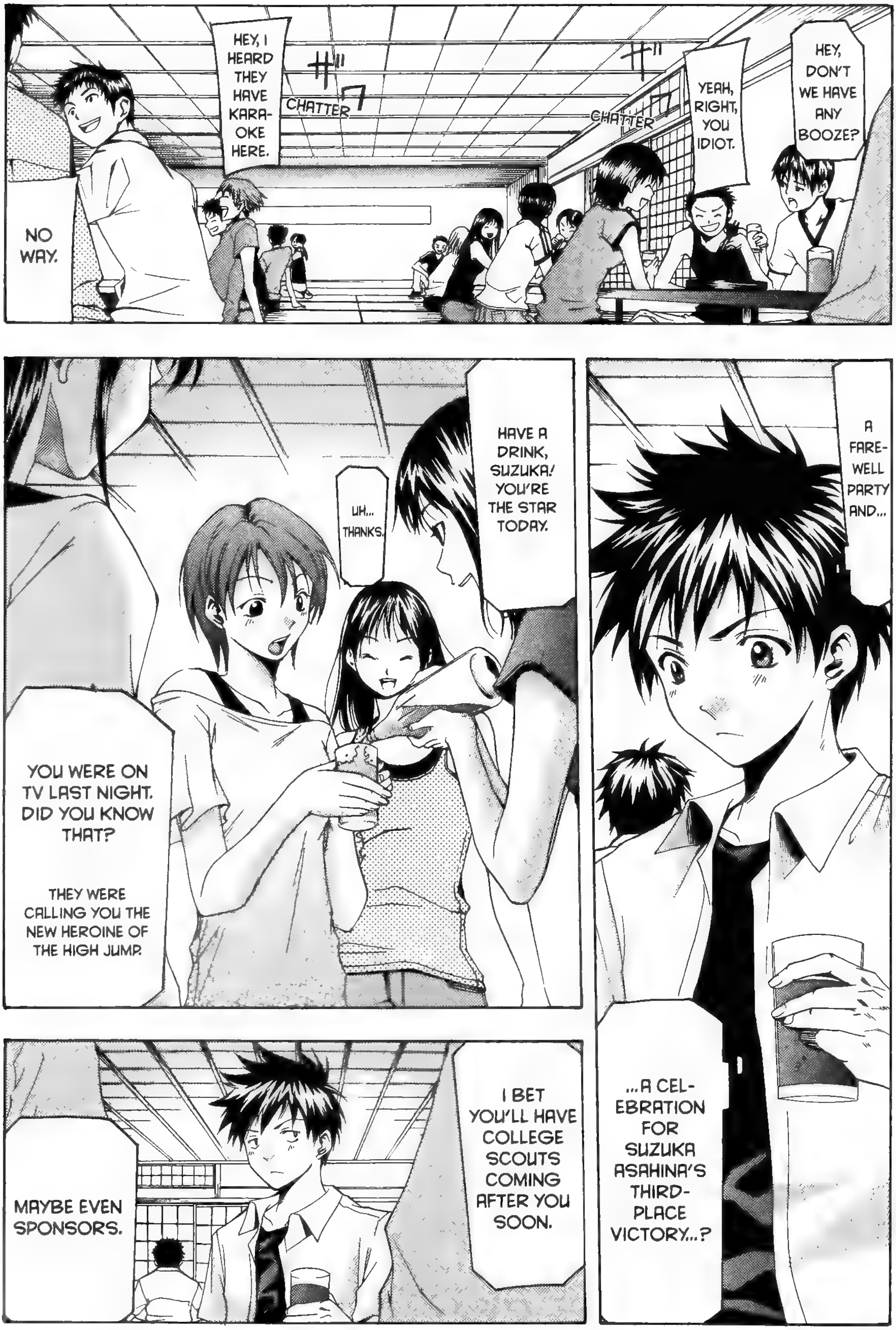
SUZUKA

#35 GOALS


OKAY.
CLINK
ガタッ
HEY, SAKURAI.
YEAH?
パタ
TAPPA
パタ
TAPPA
HONOKA-CHAN IS SUCH A HARD WORKER.
I'VE ALWAYS GOTTEN ALONG PRETTY WELL WITH HER...
AND SHE'S ALWAYS BEEN A GOOD FRIEND, BUT...


THEY SURE WERE SOFT...
THOSE LIPS...
HEY, WHY IS YOUR FACE ALL RED?
!?
I-IT'S NOTHING!
LEAVE ME ALONE, AND GET BACK TO WORK!
ドタ
TAPPA
ドタ
TAPPA
......?
I CAN'T STOP LOOKING AT HER...
USUALLY, I CAN'T TAKE MY EYES OFF ASAHINA, BUT NOW...

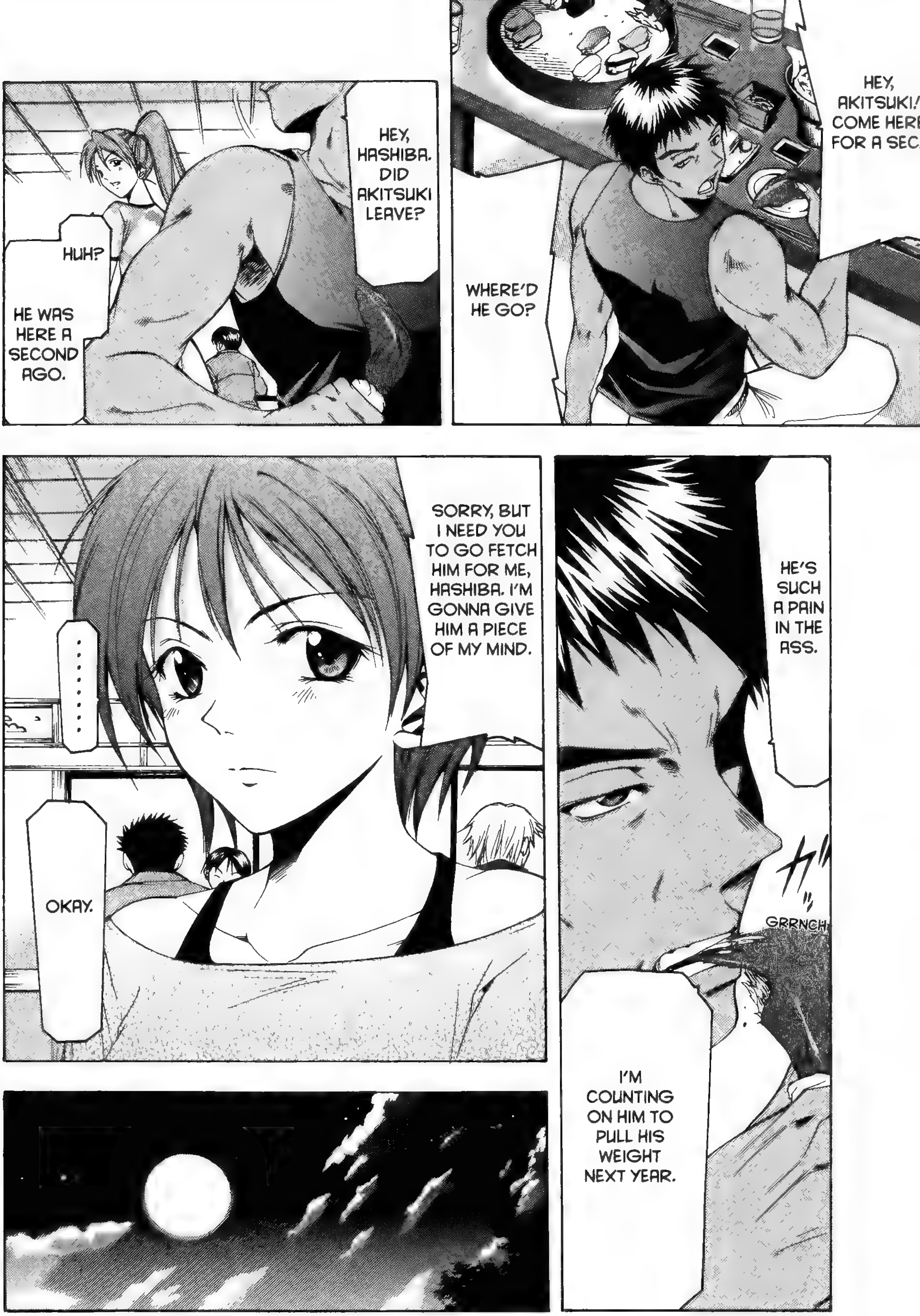

IT'S HONOKA-CHAN...
A-HEM
SENIOR FAREWELL PARTY
AND SUZUKA ASAHINA'S 3rd PLACE CELEBRATION
AFTER THREE YEARS ON THE TRACK TEAM, IT'S TIME FOR ME AND THE OTHER SENIOR TEAM MEMBERS TO STEP DOWN.
WRAP IT UP, CAPTAIN. I'M STARVING.
FWICK
SHUT UP, YOU'RE NOT EVEN ON THE TEAM.
WHAT A JERK. WE COME ALL THE WAY OUT HERE TO SHOW OUR SUPPORT, AND THIS IS WHAT WE GET?
HUH?
WE?
SHORT DISTANCE RUNNER/ SCHOLARSHIP STUDENT KENJI KOBAYASHI-KUN PLACED IN THE TOP 16 IN THE I.H. 200 METER DASH
SO I'D LIKE TO MAKE A TOAST TO THE CONTINUED SUCCESS OF AOBA HIGH'S TRACK TEAM, AND TO ASAHINA WHO TOOK THIRD PLACE AT THE I.H.
CHEERS!
WOO
CHEERS.

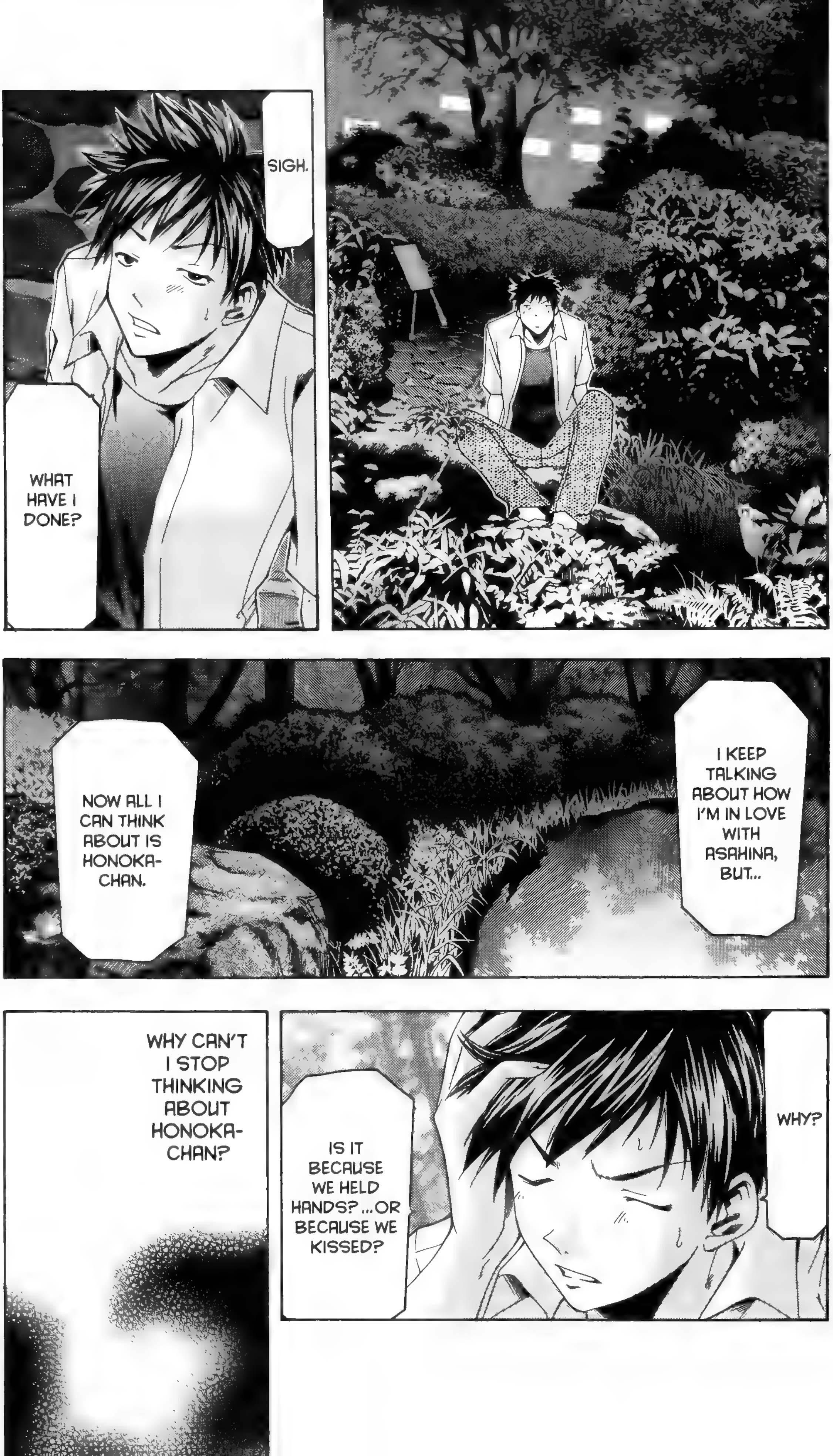

HEY, DON'T WE HAVE ANY BOOZE?
YEAH, RIGHT, YOU IDIOT.
CHATTER
CHATTER
HEY, I HEARD THEY HAVE KARAOKE HERE.
NO WAY.
A FAREWELL PARTY AND...
HAVE A DRINK, SUZUKA! YOU'RE THE STAR TODAY.
UH... THANKS.
YOU WERE ON TV LAST NIGHT. DID YOU KNOW THAT?
THEY WERE CALLING YOU THE NEW HEROINE OF THE HIGH JUMP.
...A CELEBRATION FOR SUZUKA ASAHINA'S THIRD-PLACE VICTORY...?
I BET YOU'LL HAVE COLLEGE SCOUTS COMING AFTER YOU SOON.
MAYBE EVEN SPONSORS.

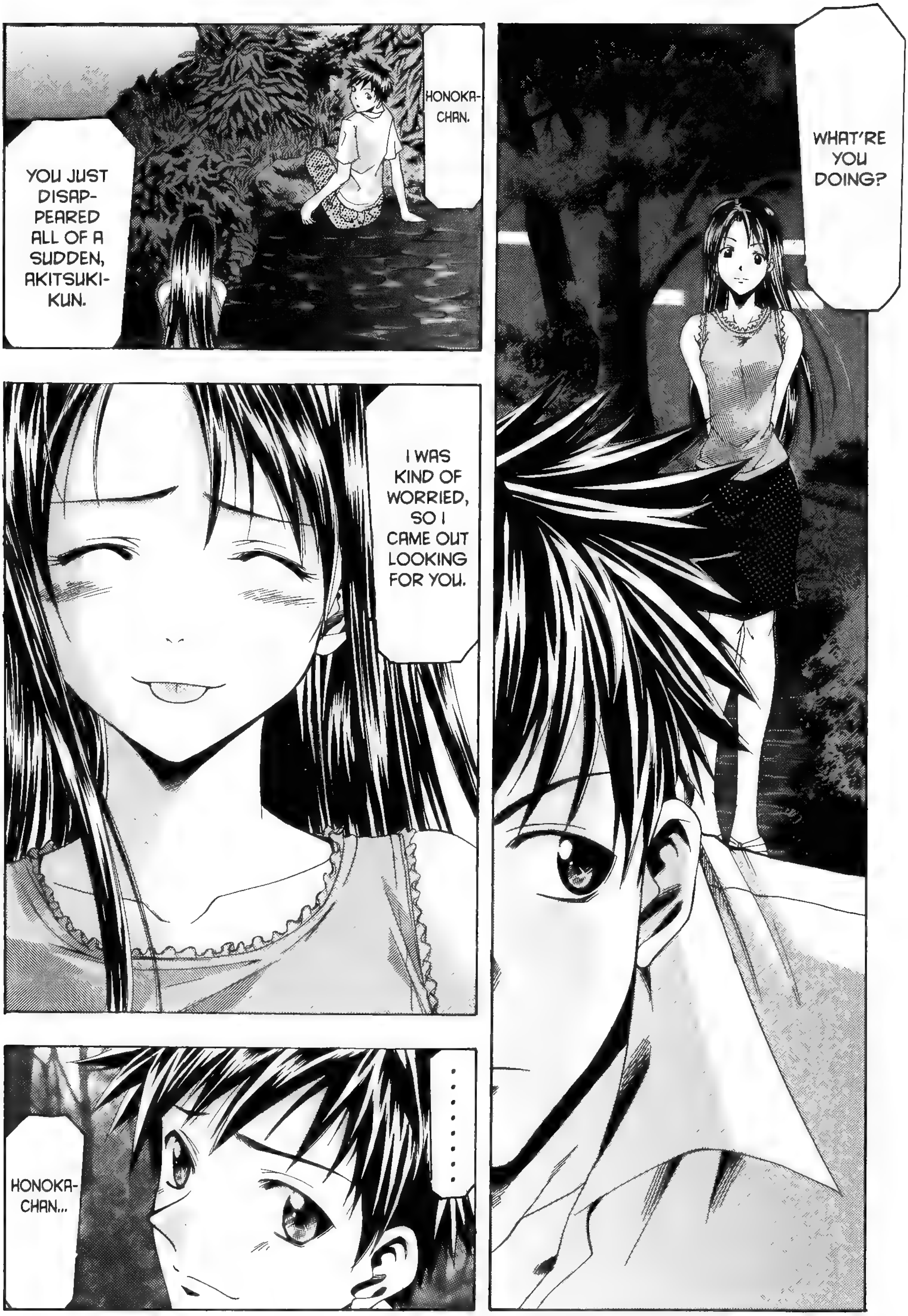
……

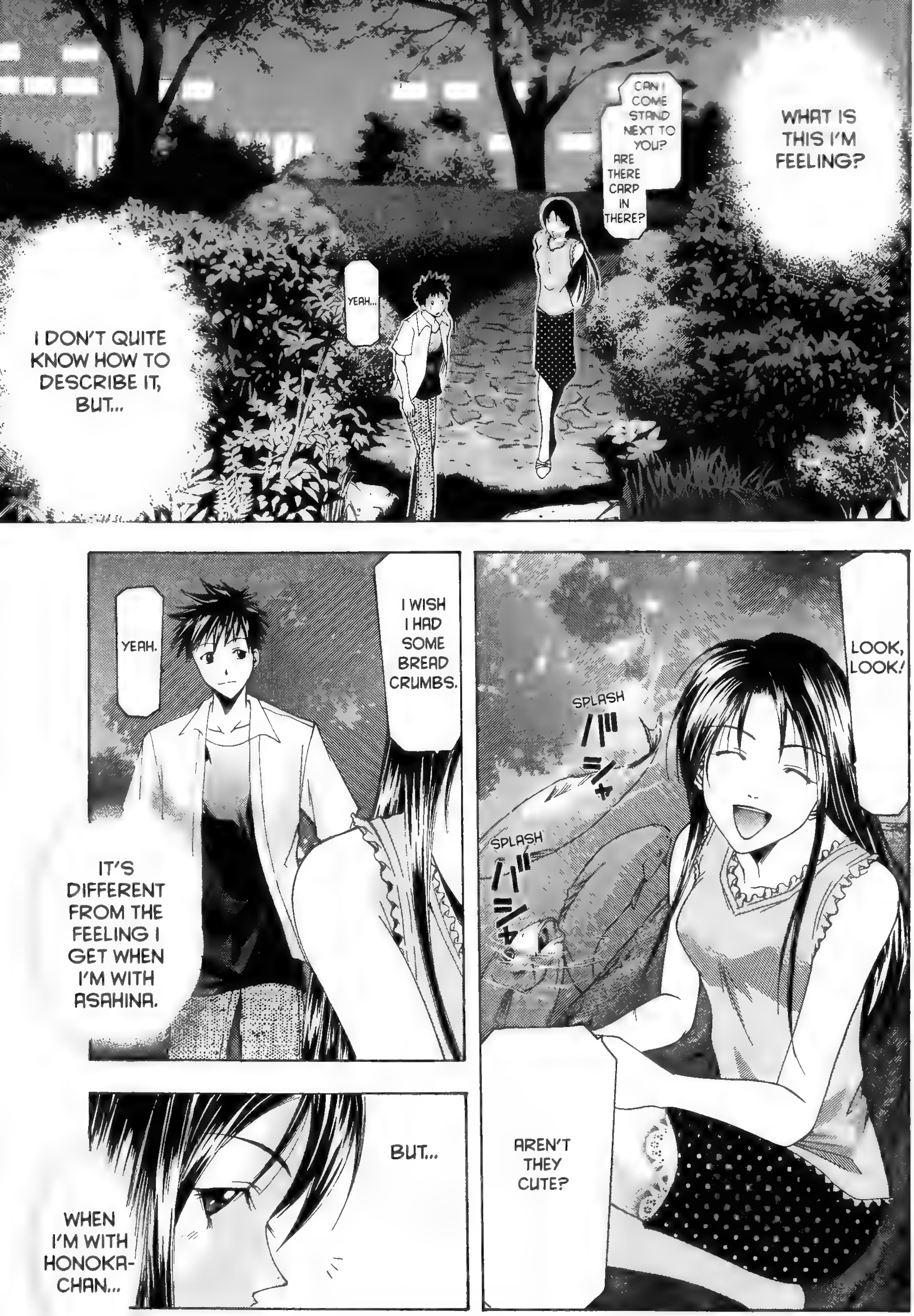
FWISH
ぐいっ

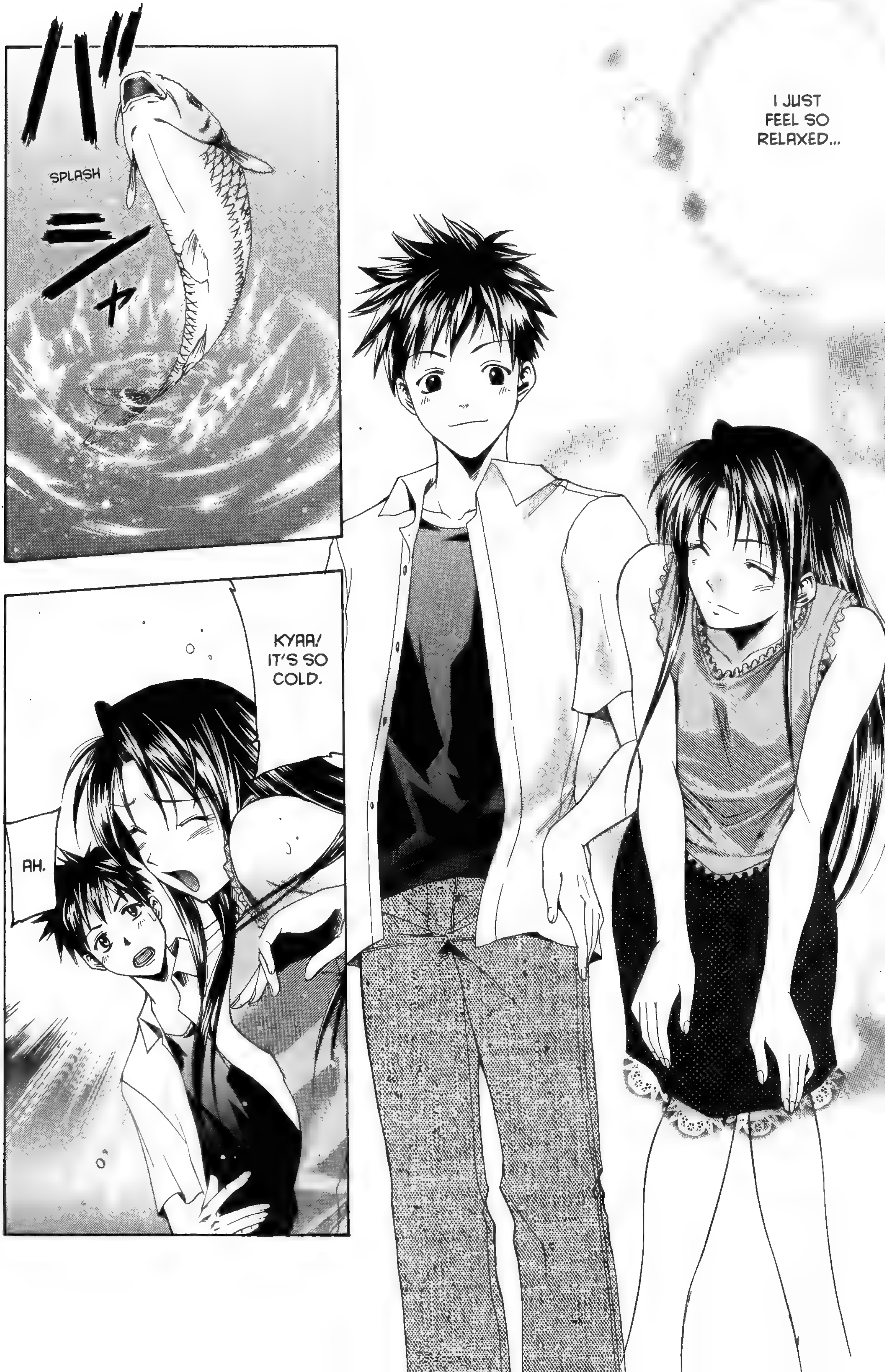
WOO
WOO
OKITA INN

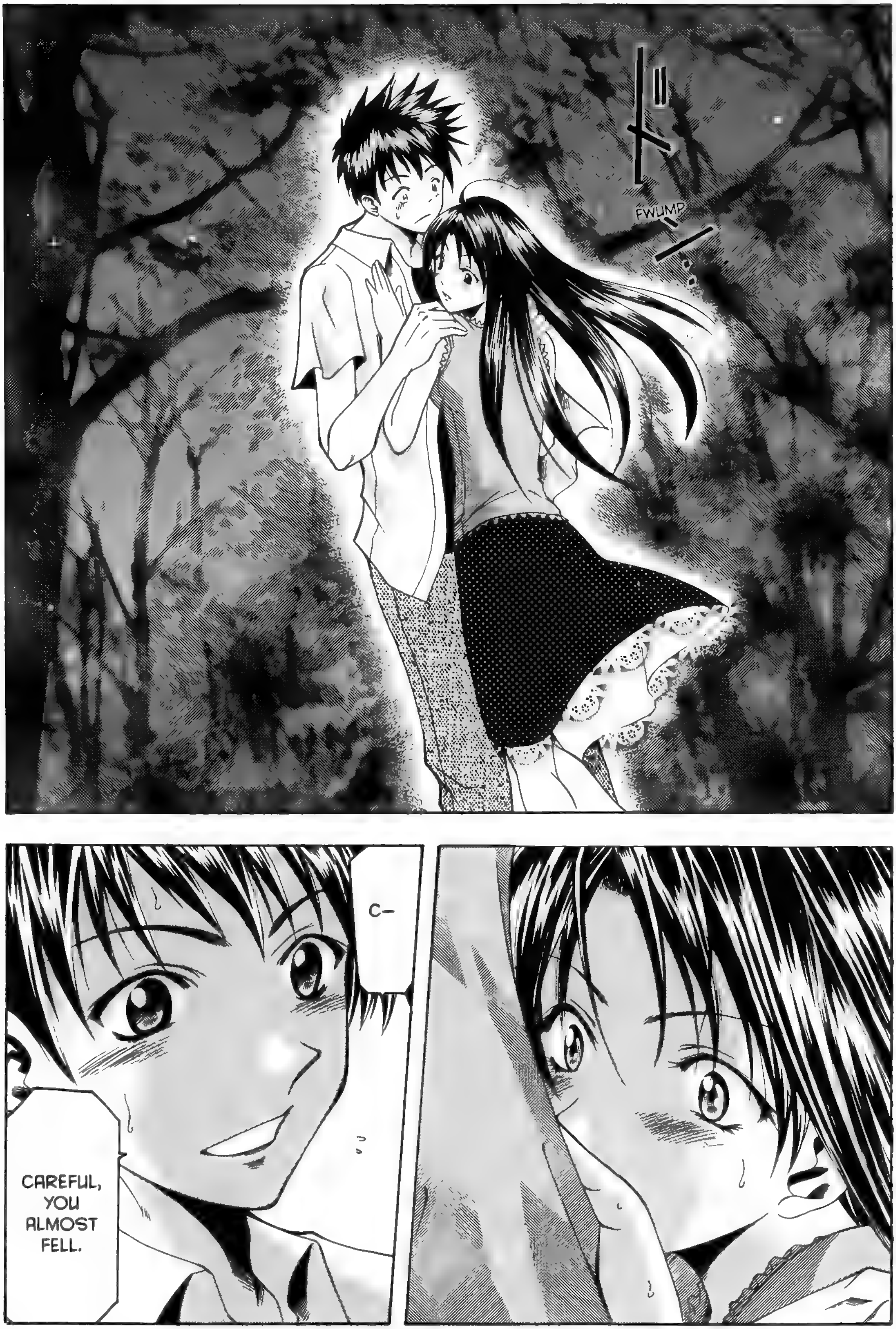

HEY, AKITSUKI! COME HER FOR A SEC
WHERE'D HE GO?
HEY, HASHIBA. DID AKITSUKI LEAVE?
HUH?
HE WAS HERE A SECOND AGO.
HE'S SUCH A PAIN IN THE ASS.
GRRNCH
I'M COUNTING ON HIM TO PULL HIS WEIGHT NEXT YEAR.
SORRY, BUT I NEED YOU TO GO FETCH HIM FOR ME, HASHIBA. I'M GONNA GIVE HIM A PIECE OF MY MIND.
......
OKAY.

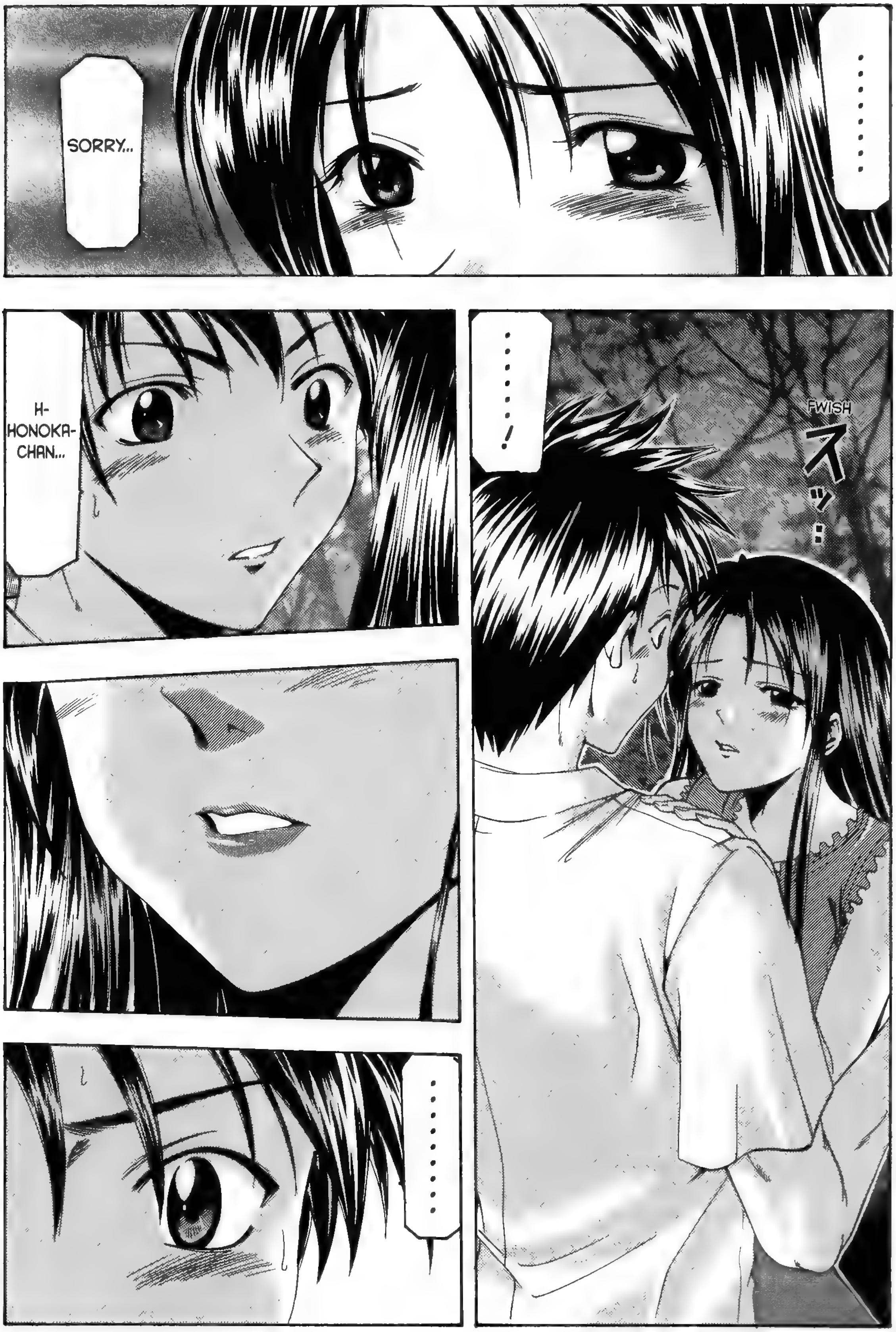

SIGH.
WHAT HAVE I DONE?
I KEEP TALKING ABOUT HOW I'M IN LOVE WITH ASAHINA, BUT...
NOW ALL I CAN THINK ABOUT IS HONOKA-CHAN.
WHY?
IS IT BECAUSE WE HELD HANDS? ...OR BECAUSE WE KISSED?
WHY CAN'T I STOP THINKING ABOUT HONOKA-CHAN?

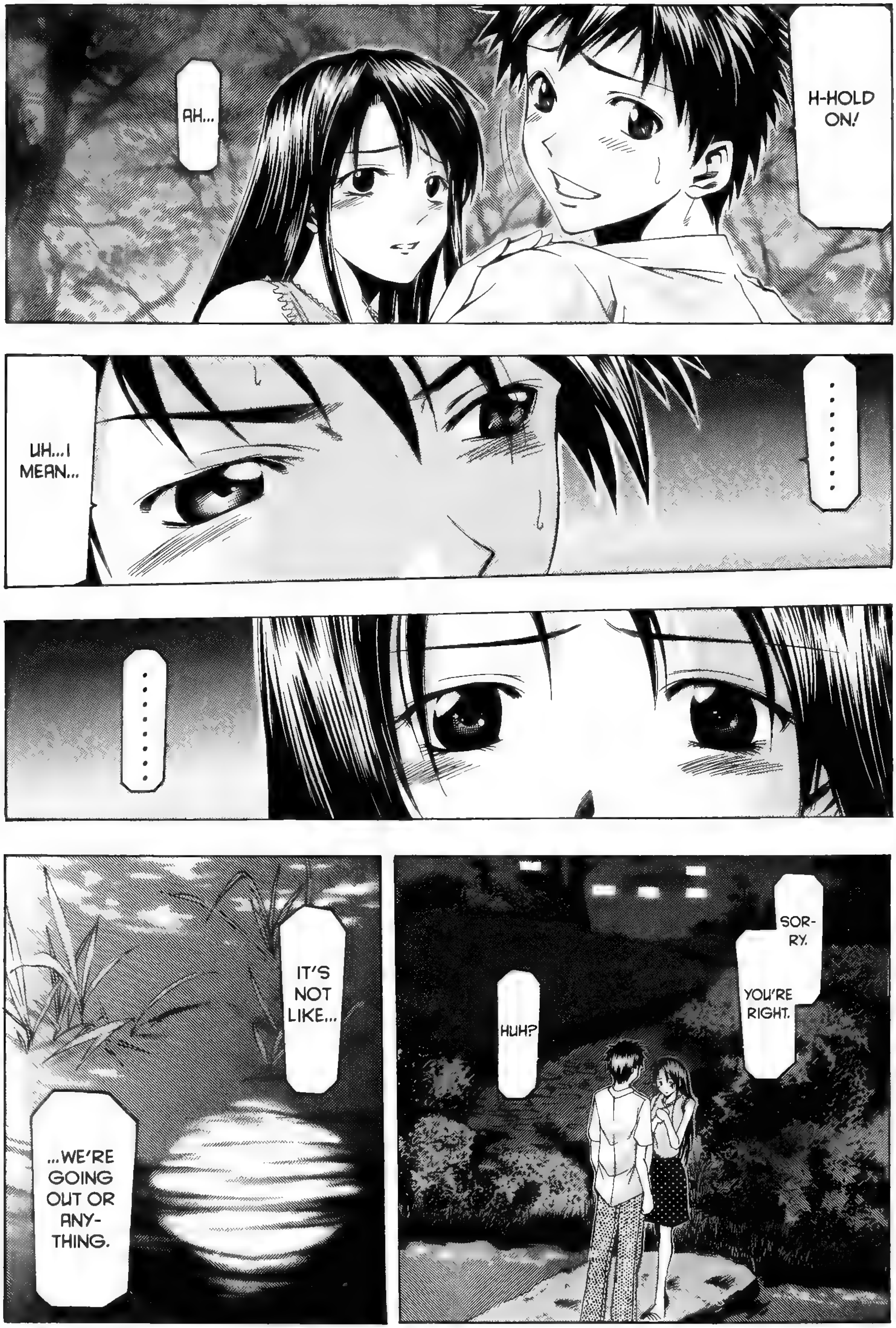

WHAT'RE YOU DOING?
HONOKA-CHAN.
YOU JUST DISAPPEARED ALL OF A SUDDEN, AKITSUKI-KUN.
I WAS KIND OF WORRIED, SO I CAME OUT LOOKING FOR YOU.
......
HONOKA-CHAN...

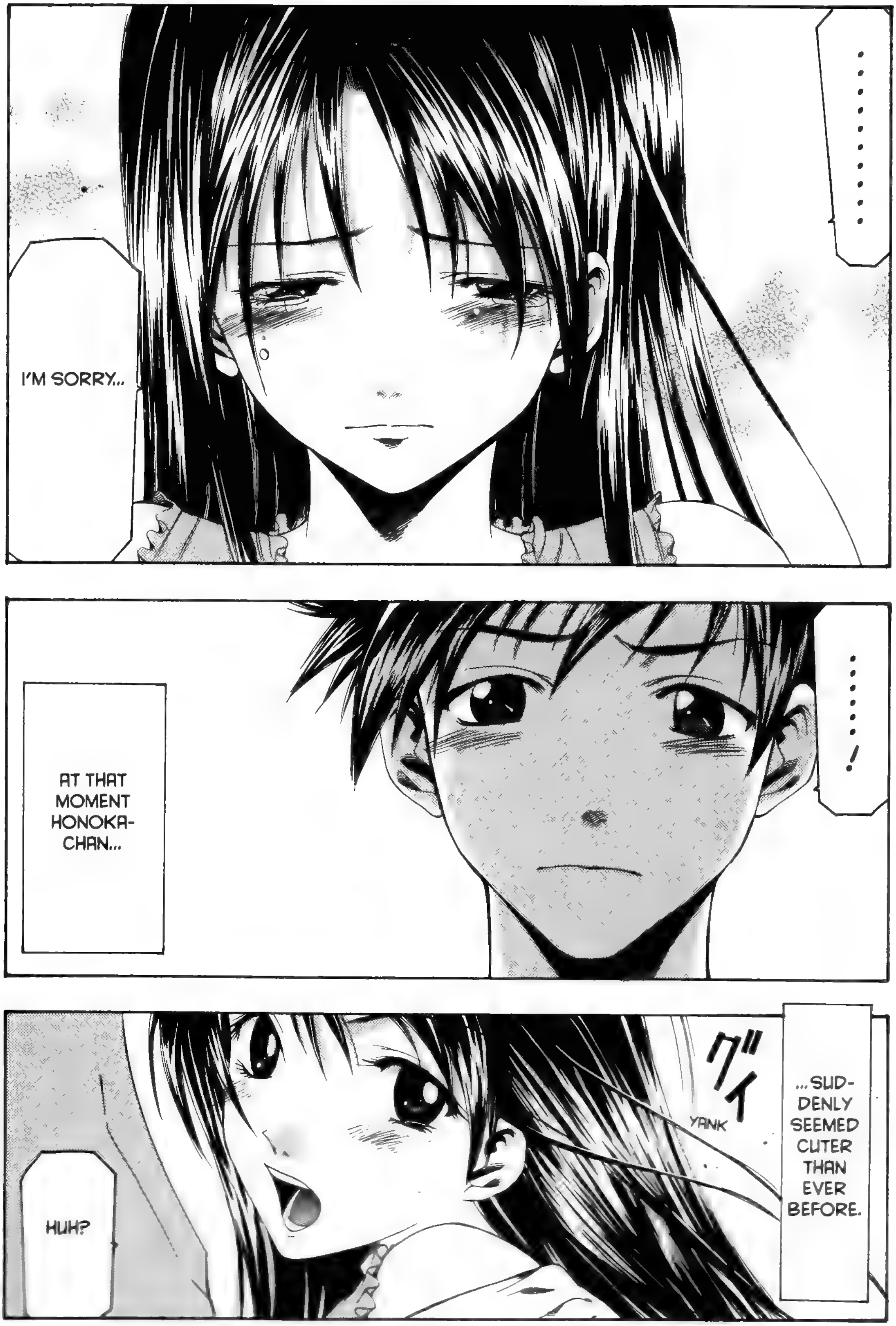

WHAT IS THIS I'M FEELING?
CAN I COME STAND NEXT TO YOU? ARE THERE CARP IN THERE?
YEAH...
I DON'T QUITE KNOW HOW TO DESCRIBE IT, BUT...
LOOK, LOOK!
SPLASH バシャ
SPLASH バシャ
AREN'T THEY CUTE?
I WISH I HAD SOME BREAD CRUMBS.
YEAH.
IT'S DIFFERENT FROM THE FEELING I GET WHEN I'M WITH ASAHINA.
BUT...
WHEN I'M WITH HONOKA-CHAN...

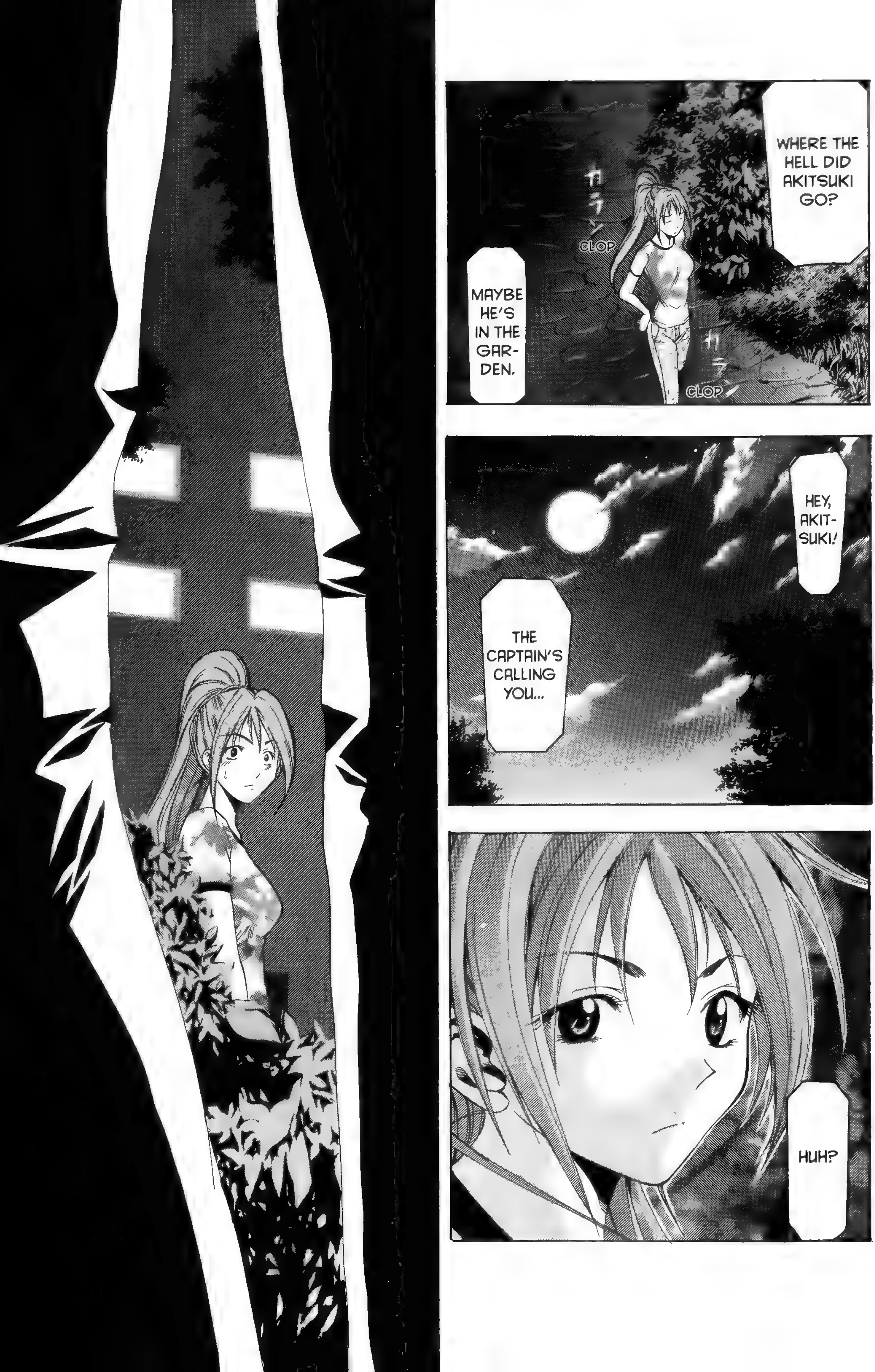

I JUST FEEL SO RELAXED...
バシャ
SPLASH
KYAA! IT'S SO COLD.
AH.

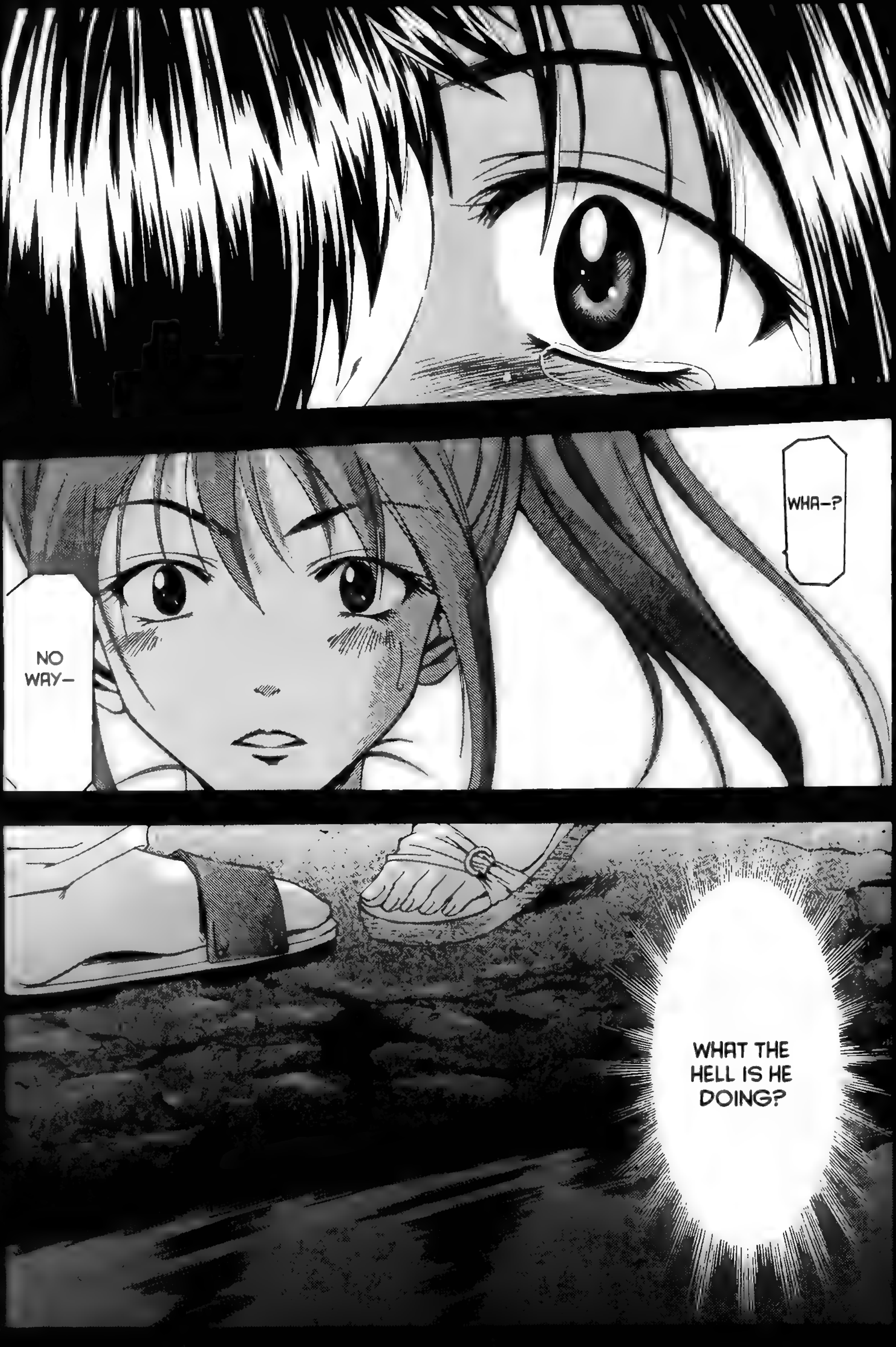

FWUMP
C–
CAREFUL, YOU ALMOST FELL.


....
SORRY...
......!
FWISH
スッ…
H-HONOKA-CHAN...
....

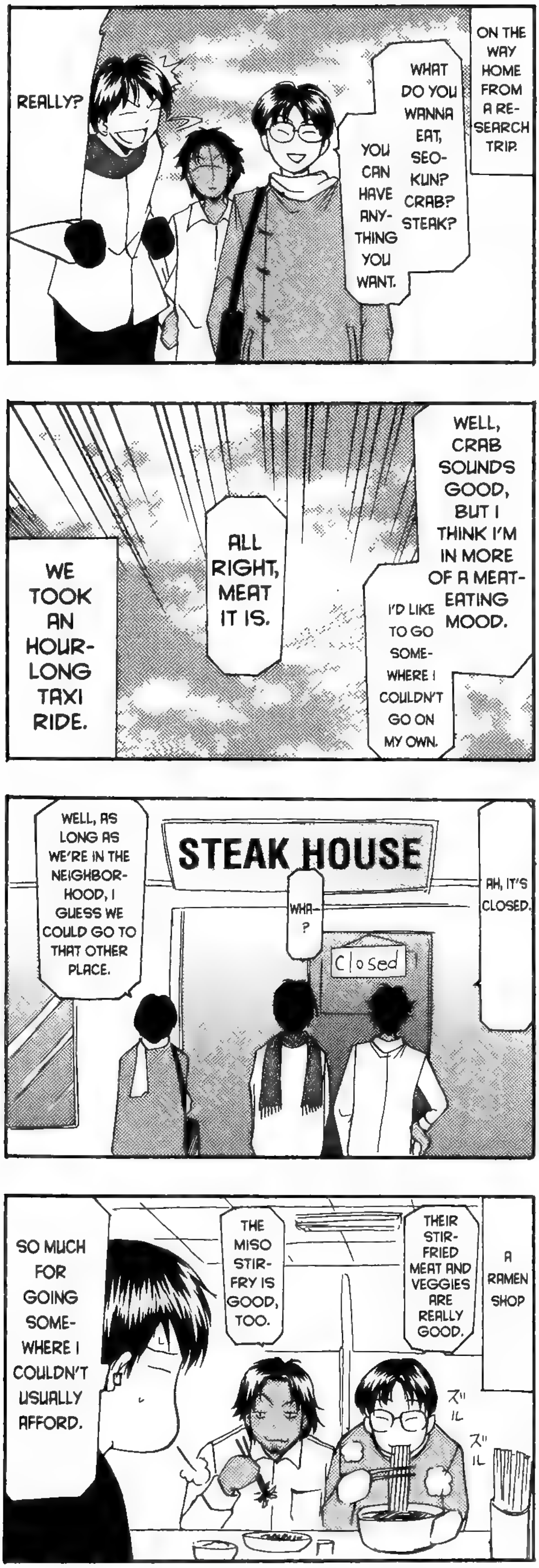

AH...
H-HOLD ON!
UH...I MEAN...
......
......
IT'S NOT LIKE...
...WE'RE GOING OUT OR ANYTHING.
HUH?
SORRY.
YOU'RE RIGHT.

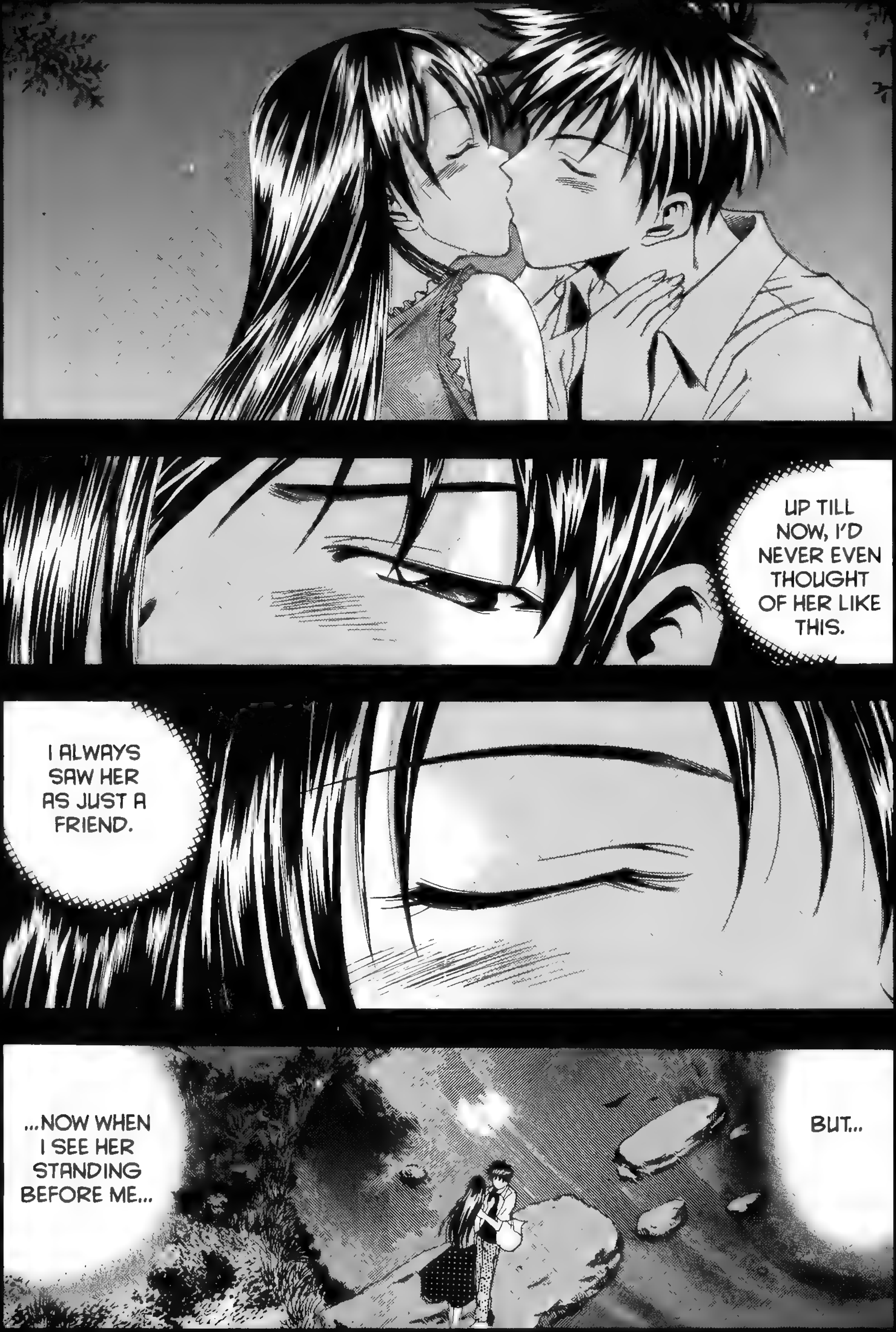

……
I'M SORRY…
……!
AT THAT MOMENT HONOKA-CHAN…
…SUDDENLY SEEMED CUTER THAN EVER BEFORE.
グイ
YANK
HUH?

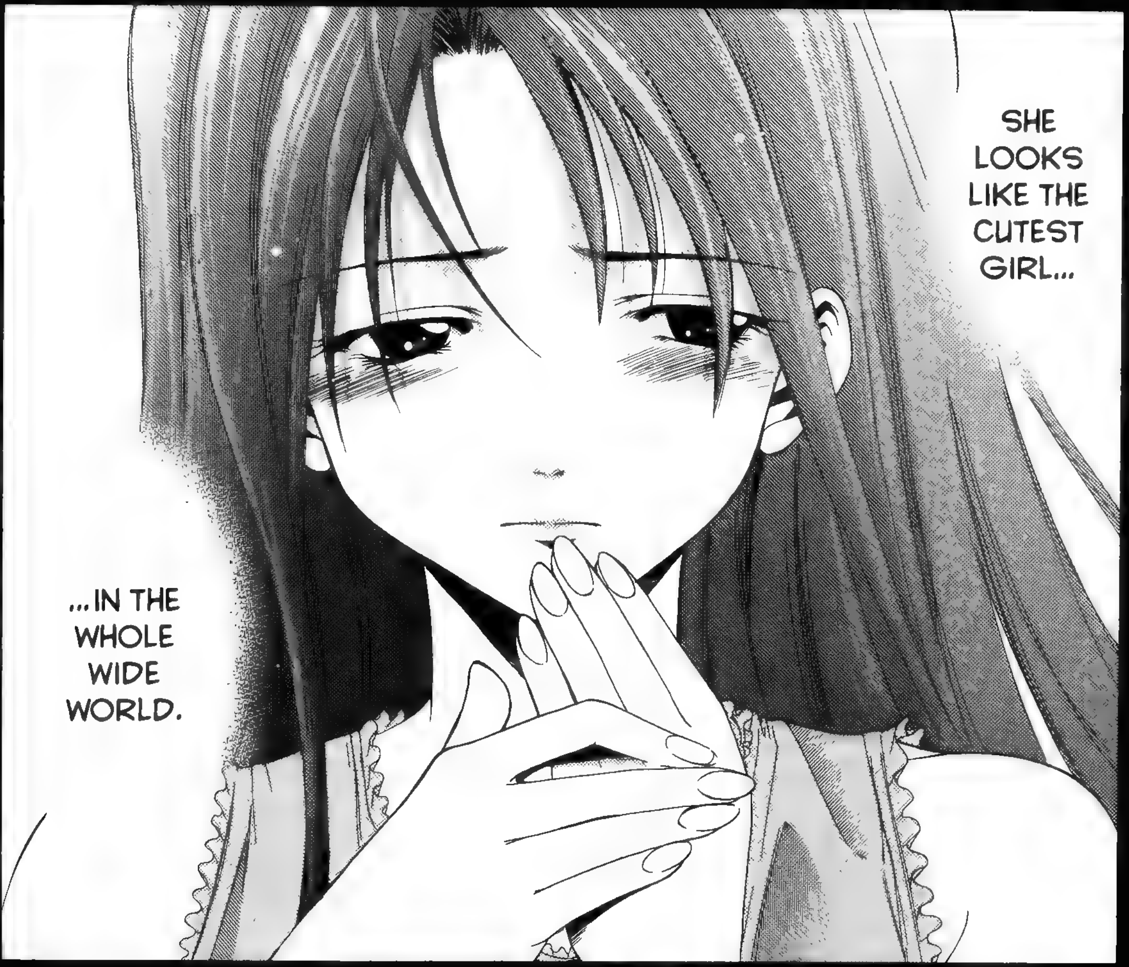

WHERE THE HELL DID AKITSUKI GO?
カラン
CLOP
MAYBE HE'S IN THE GARDEN.
カラ
CLOP
HEY, AKITSUKI!
THE CAPTAIN'S CALLING YOU...
HUH?


WHA-?
NO WAY-
WHAT THE HELL IS HE DOING?

SUZUKA
FOUR-PANEL THEATER
NUMBER TWENTY
CHOICES

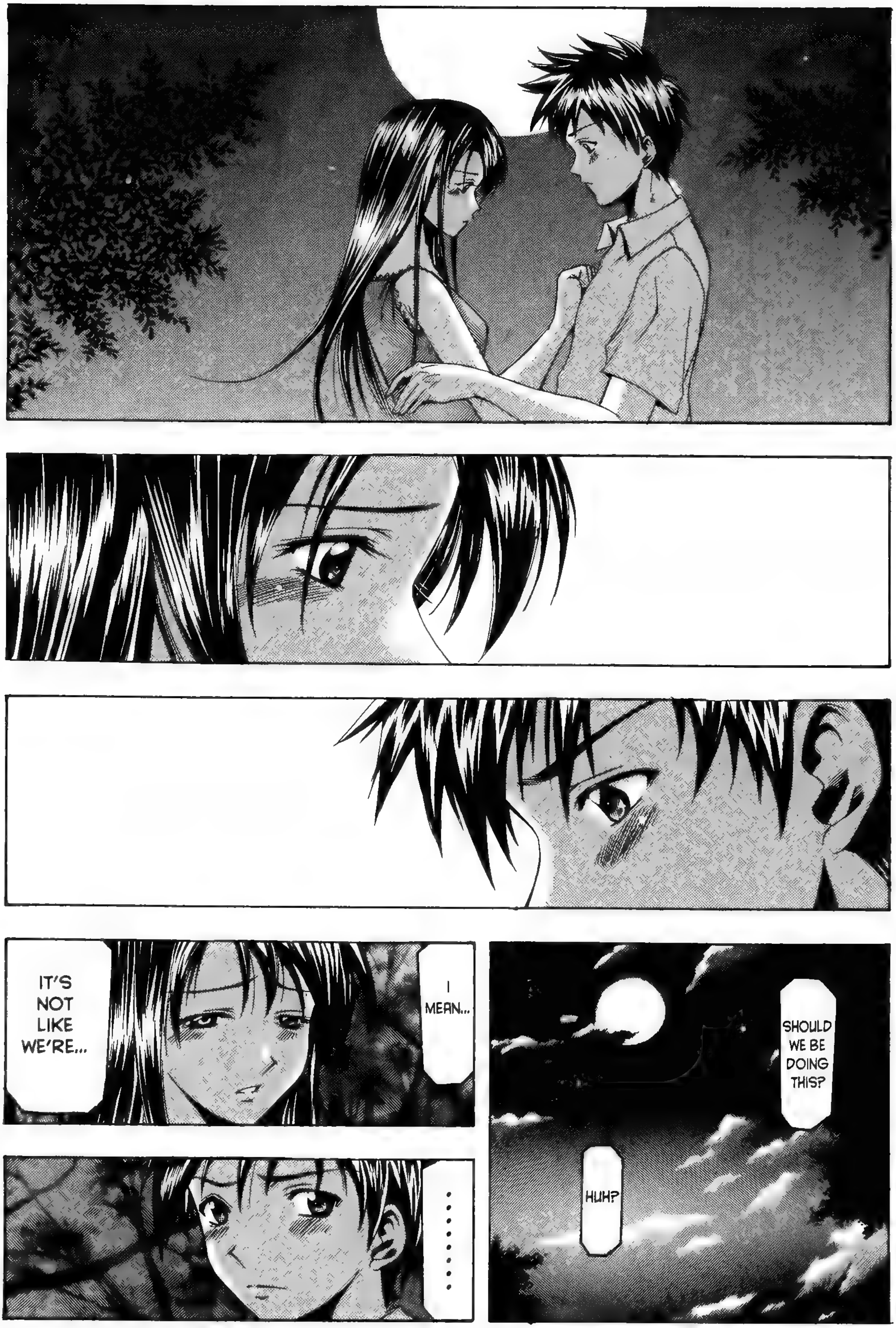

ON THE WAY HOME FROM A RESEARCH TRIP.
WHAT DO YOU WANNA EAT, SEO-KUN? CRAB? STEAK?
YOU CAN HAVE ANYTHING YOU WANT.
REALLY?
WELL, CRAB SOUNDS GOOD, BUT I THINK I'M IN MORE OF A MEAT-EATING MOOD.
I'D LIKE TO GO SOMEWHERE I COULDN'T GO ON MY OWN.
ALL RIGHT, MEAT IT IS.
WE TOOK AN HOUR-LONG TAXI RIDE.
AH, IT'S CLOSED.
STEAK HOUSE
WHA-?
Closed
WELL, AS LONG AS WE'RE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD, I GUESS WE COULD GO TO THAT OTHER PLACE.
A RAMEN SHOP
THEIR STIR-FRIED MEAT AND VEGGIES ARE REALLY GOOD.
THE MISO STIR-FRY IS GOOD, TOO.
ズル ズル
SO MUCH FOR GOING SOMEWHERE I COULDN'T USUALLY AFFORD.

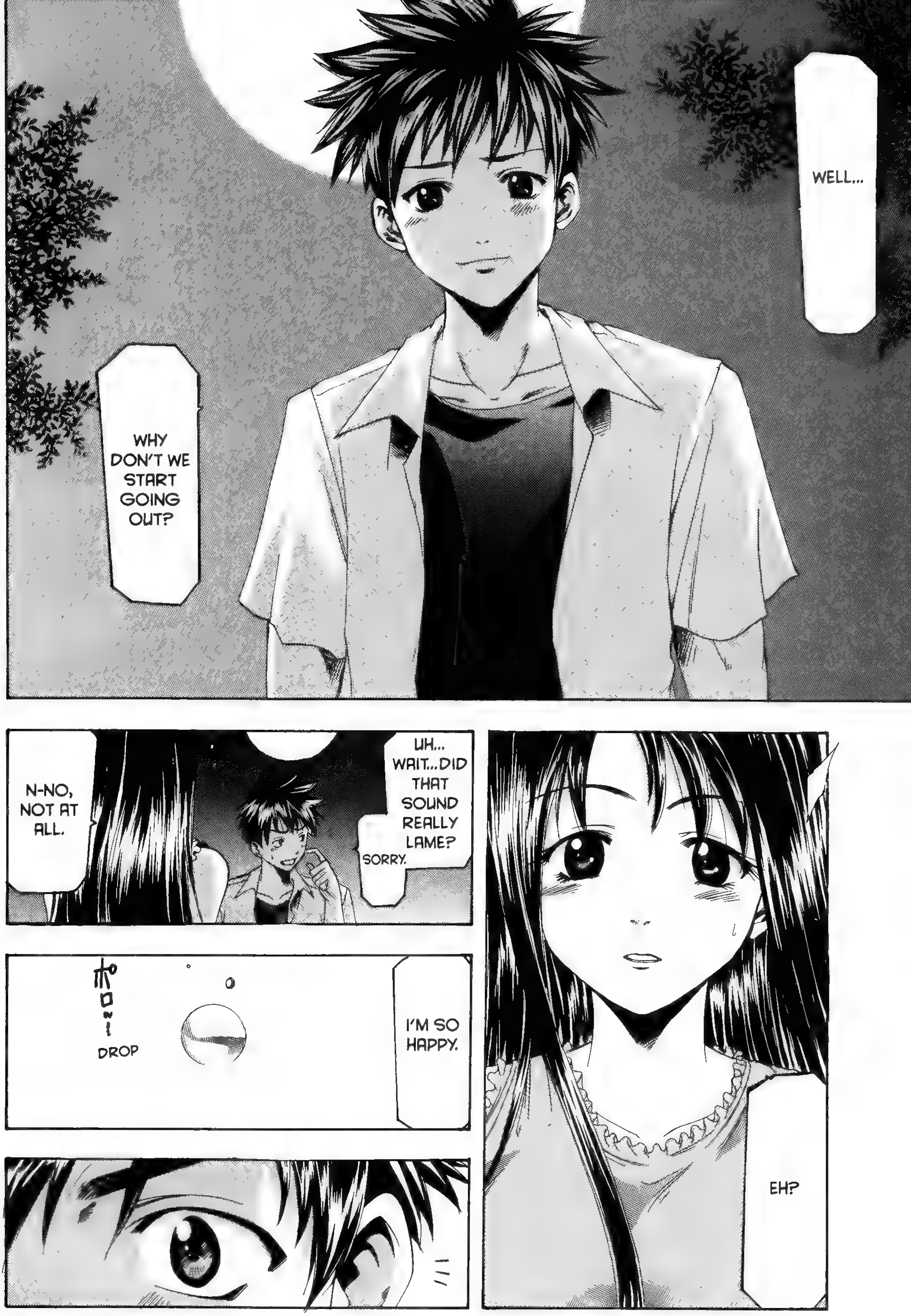

UP TILL NOW, I'D NEVER EVEN THOUGHT OF HER LIKE THIS.
I ALWAYS SAW HER AS JUST A FRIEND.
BUT...
...NOW WHEN I SEE HER STANDING BEFORE ME...

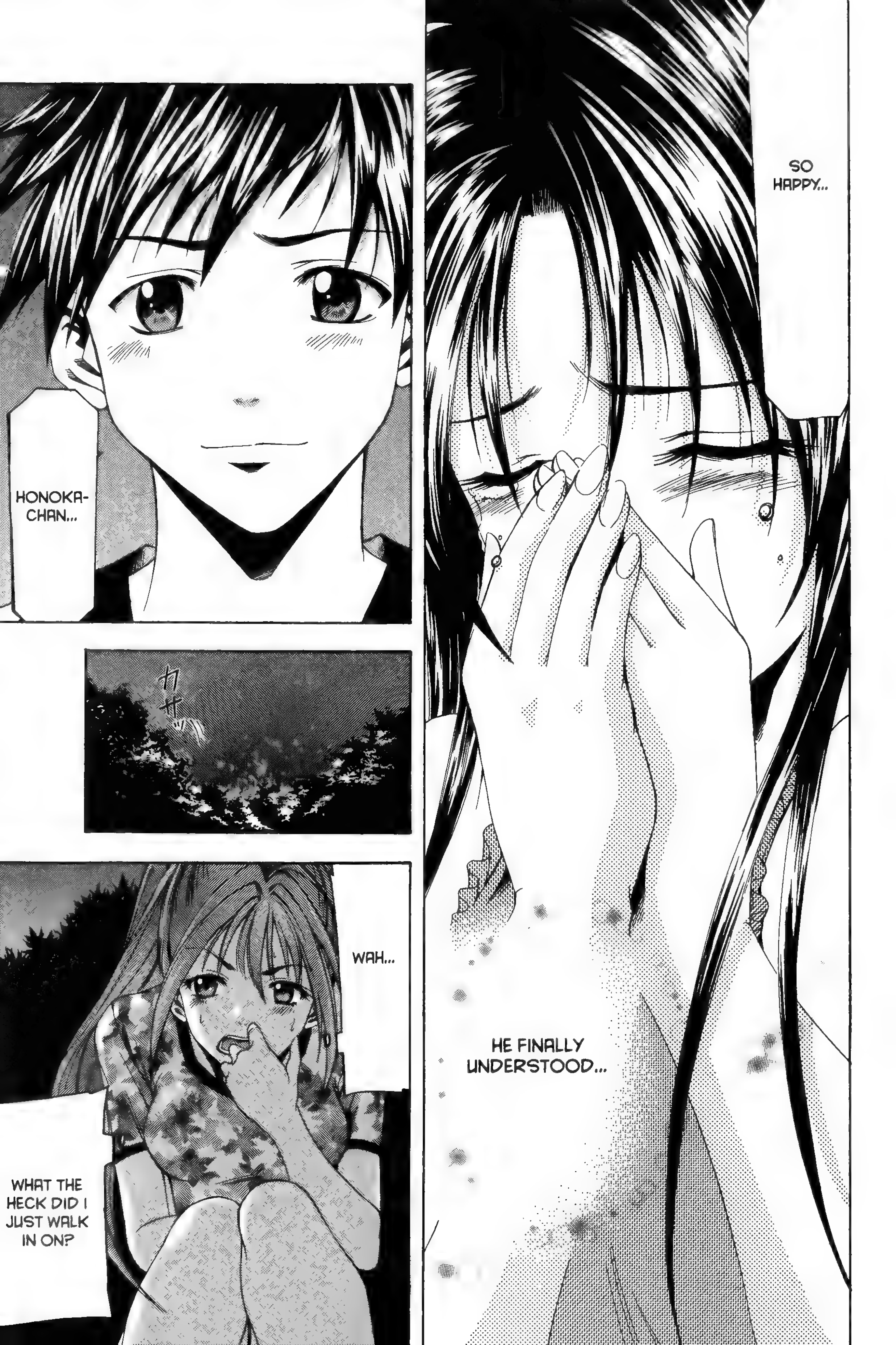

SHE LOOKS LIKE THE CUTEST GIRL...
...IN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD.

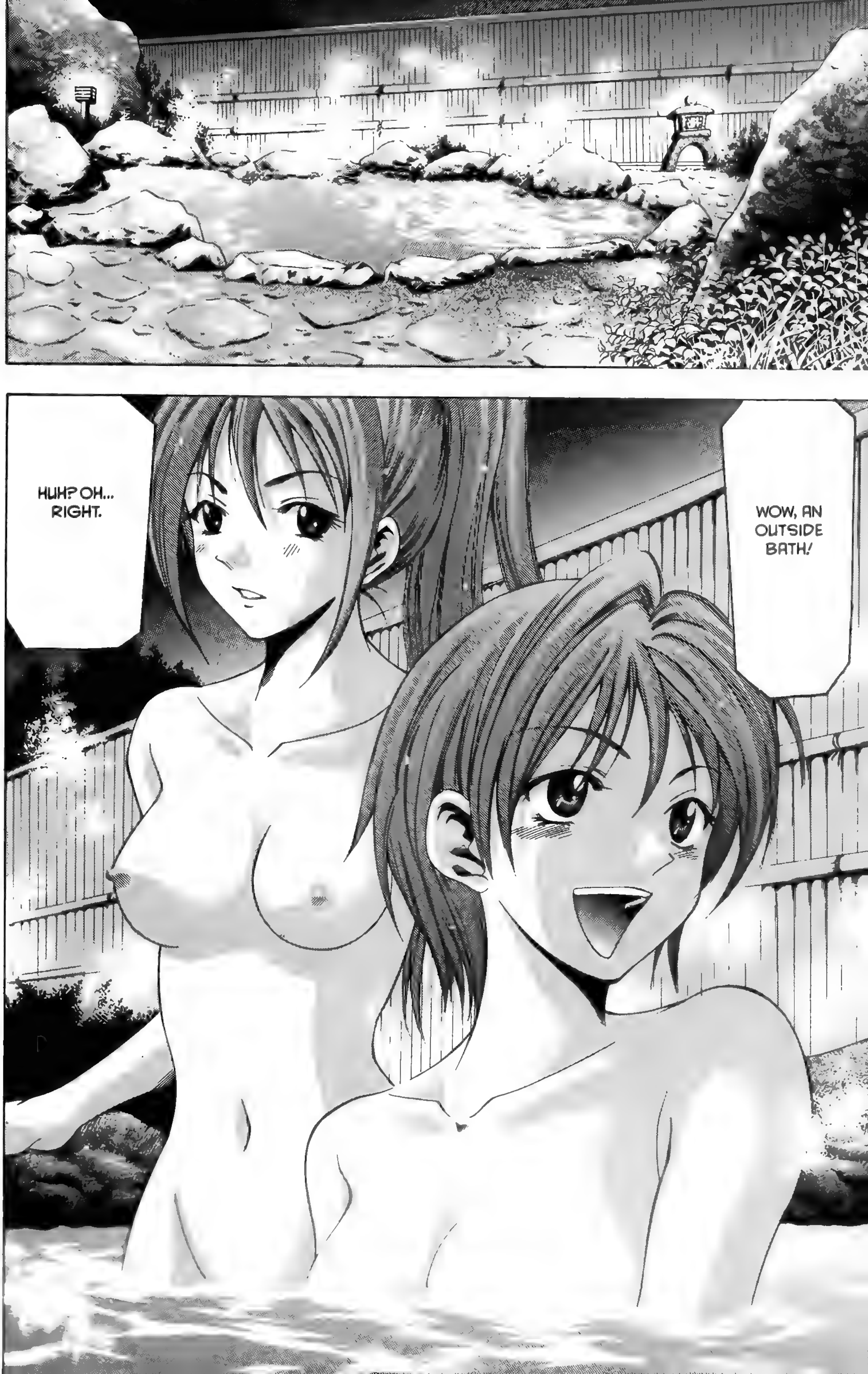
SUZUKA

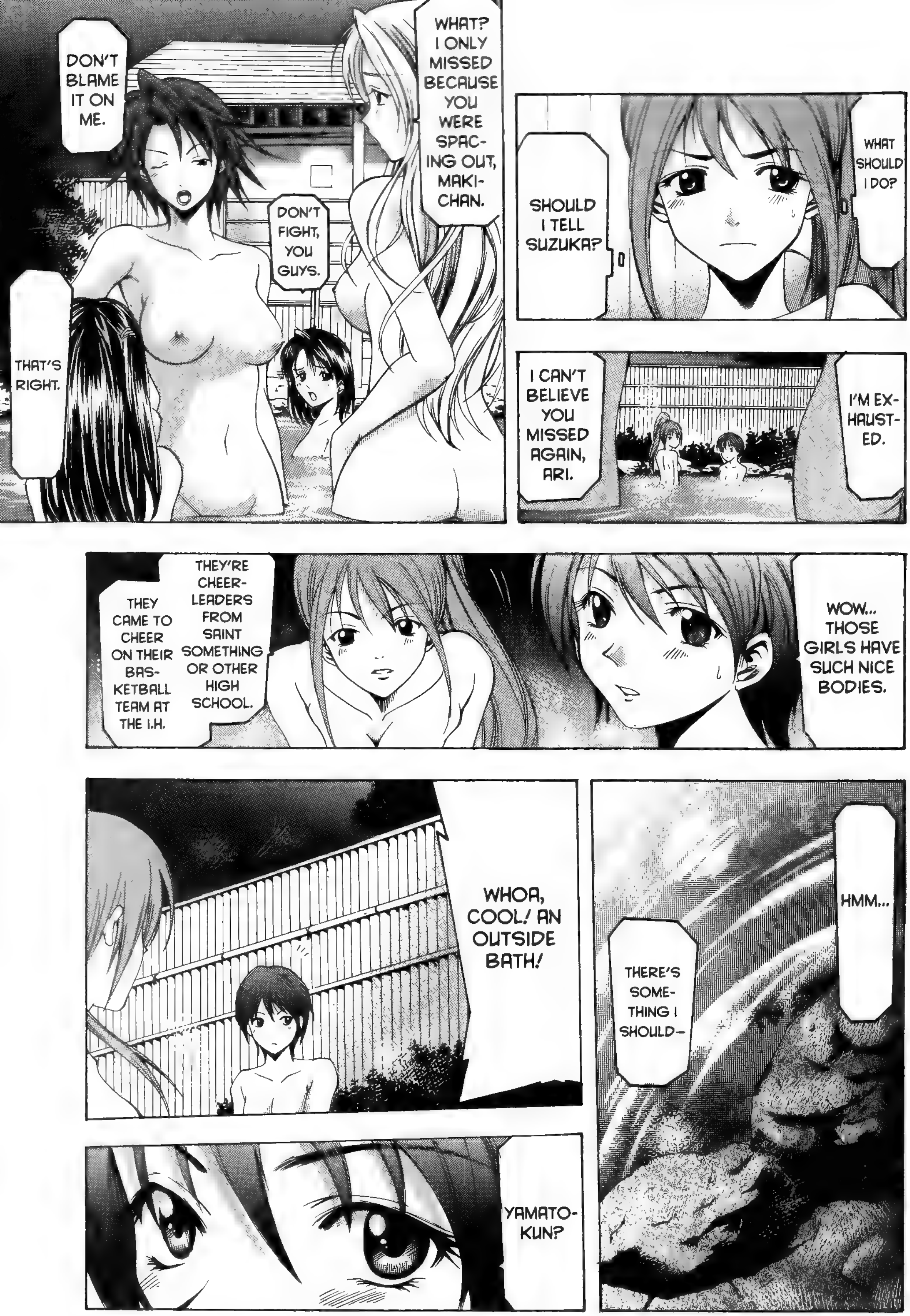
#36 EXPOSED

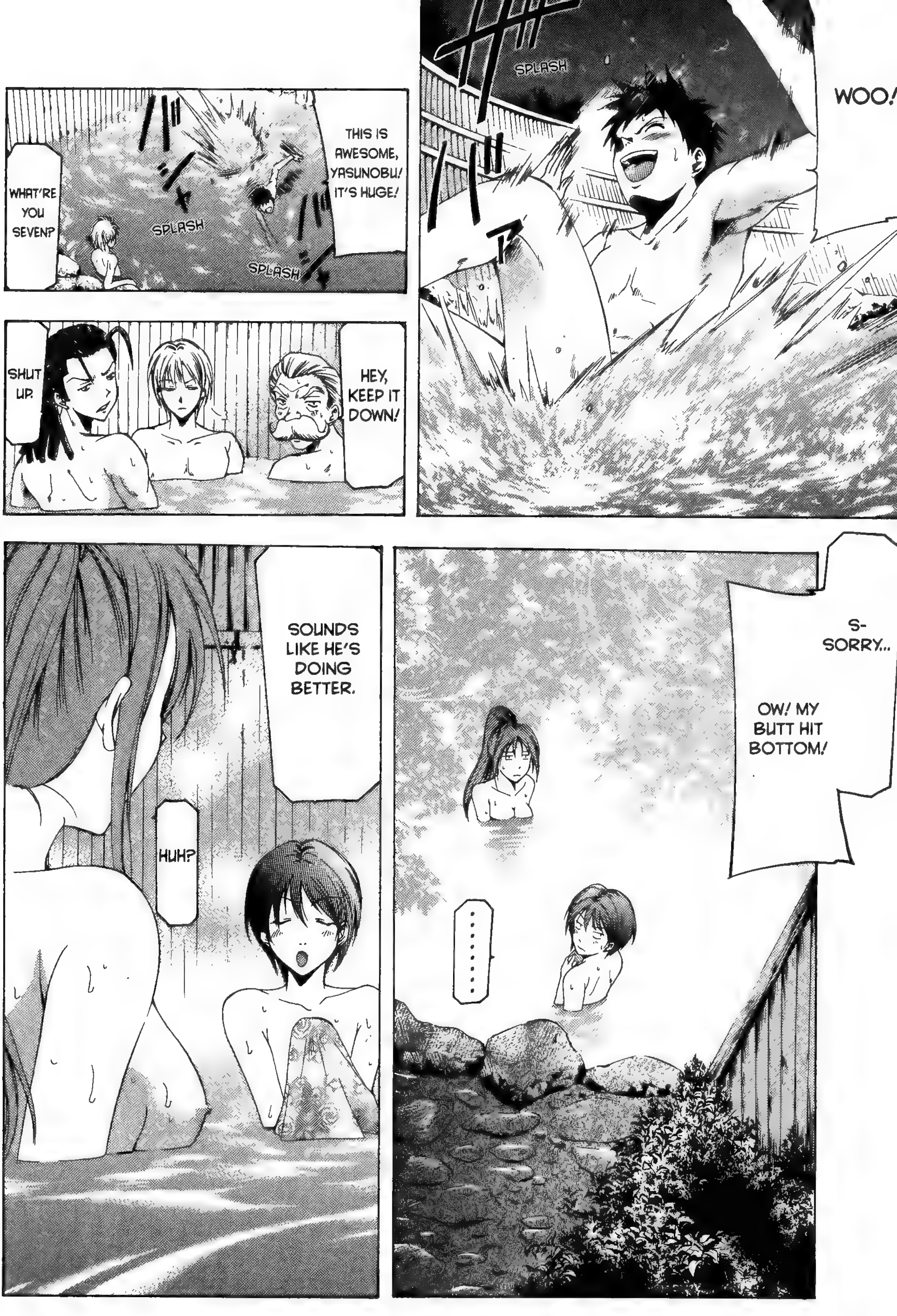

SHOULD WE BE DOING THIS?
HUH?
I MEAN...
IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE...
....

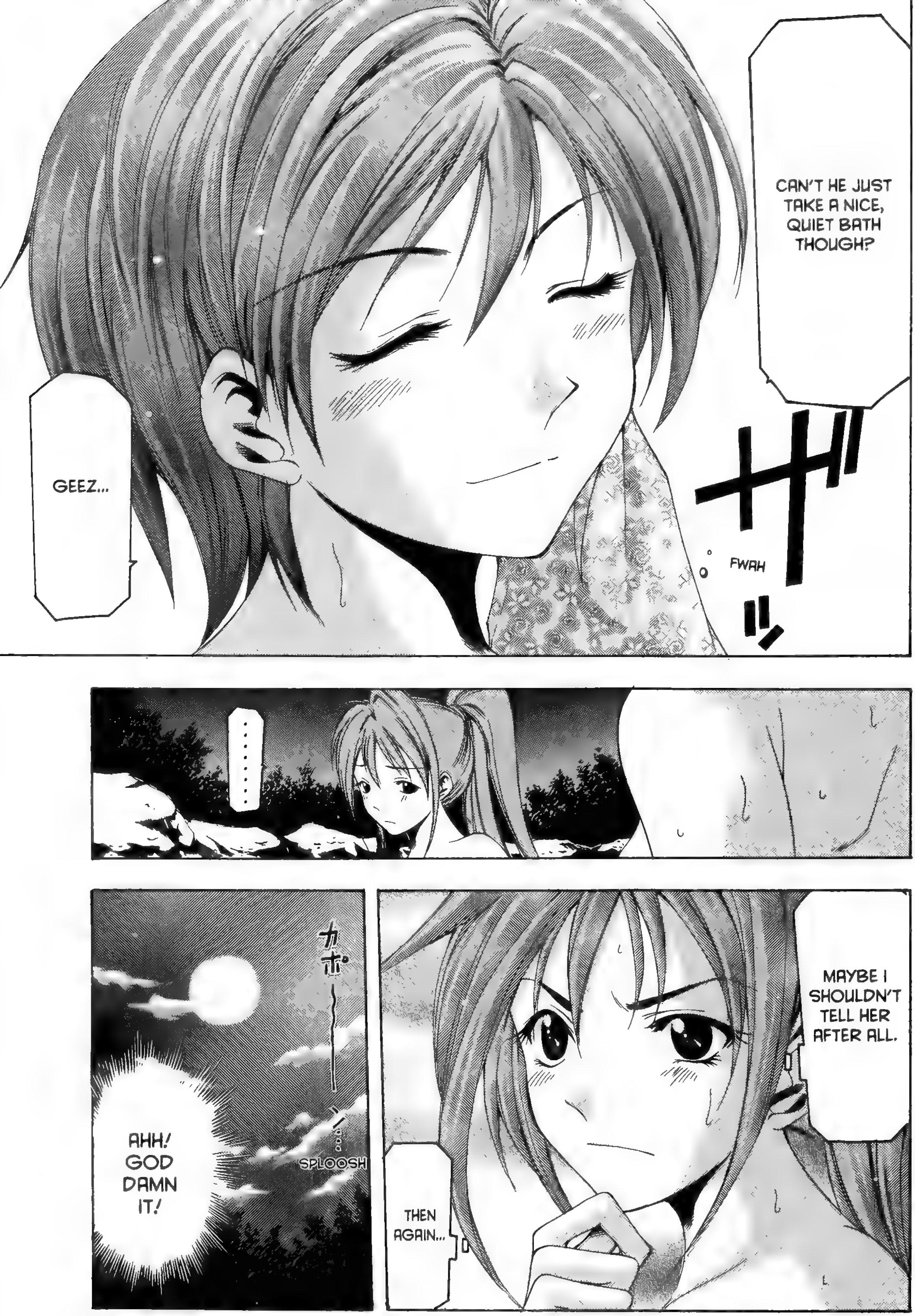

WELL...
WHY DON'T WE START GOING OUT?
EH?
UH... WAIT...DID THAT SOUND REALLY LAME?
SORRY.
N-NO, NOT AT ALL.
I'M SO HAPPY.
ポロ…
DROP

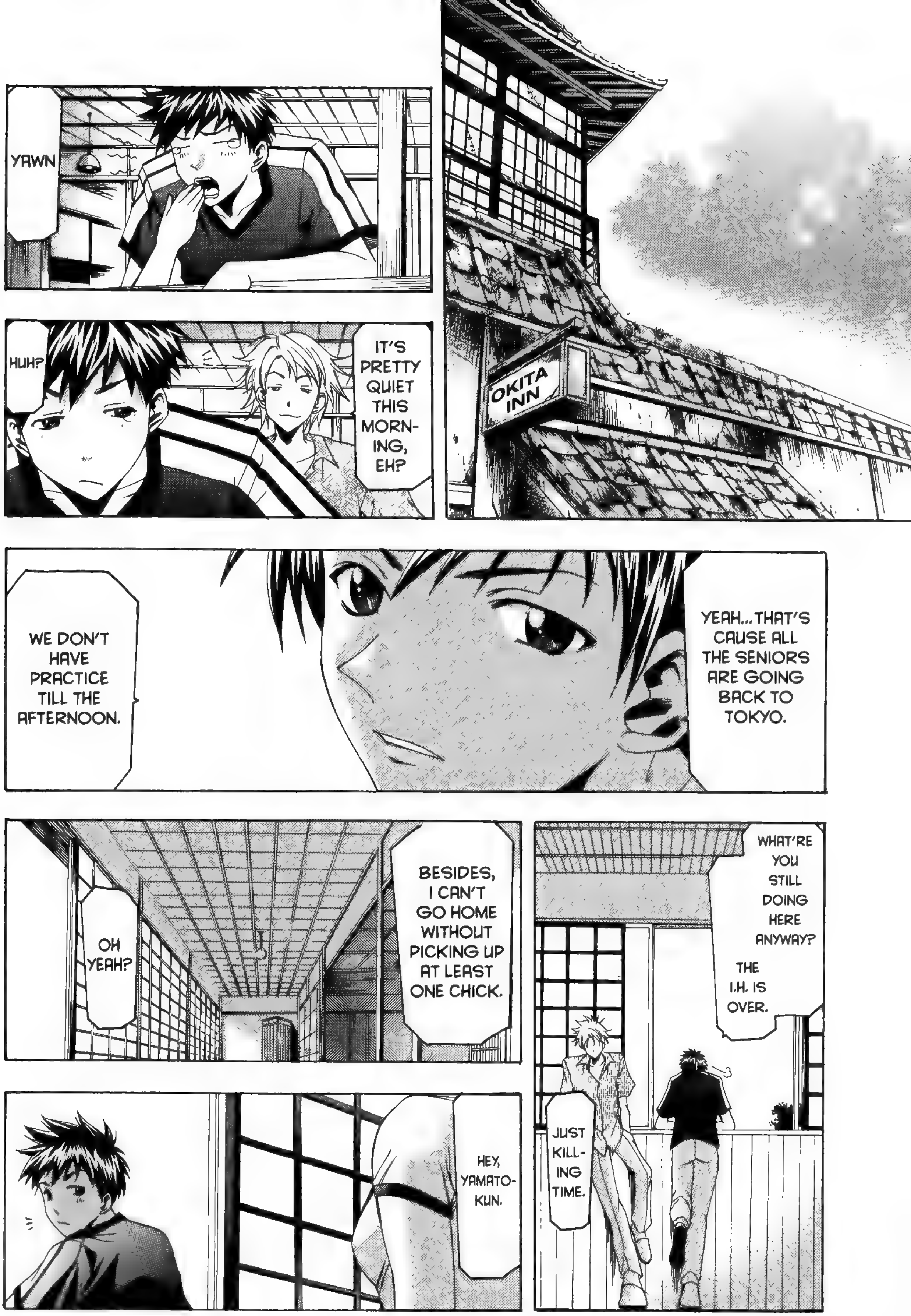

SO HAPPY...
HE FINALLY UNDERSTOOD...
HONOKA-CHAN...
カサッ
WAH...
WHAT THE HECK DID I JUST WALK IN ON?

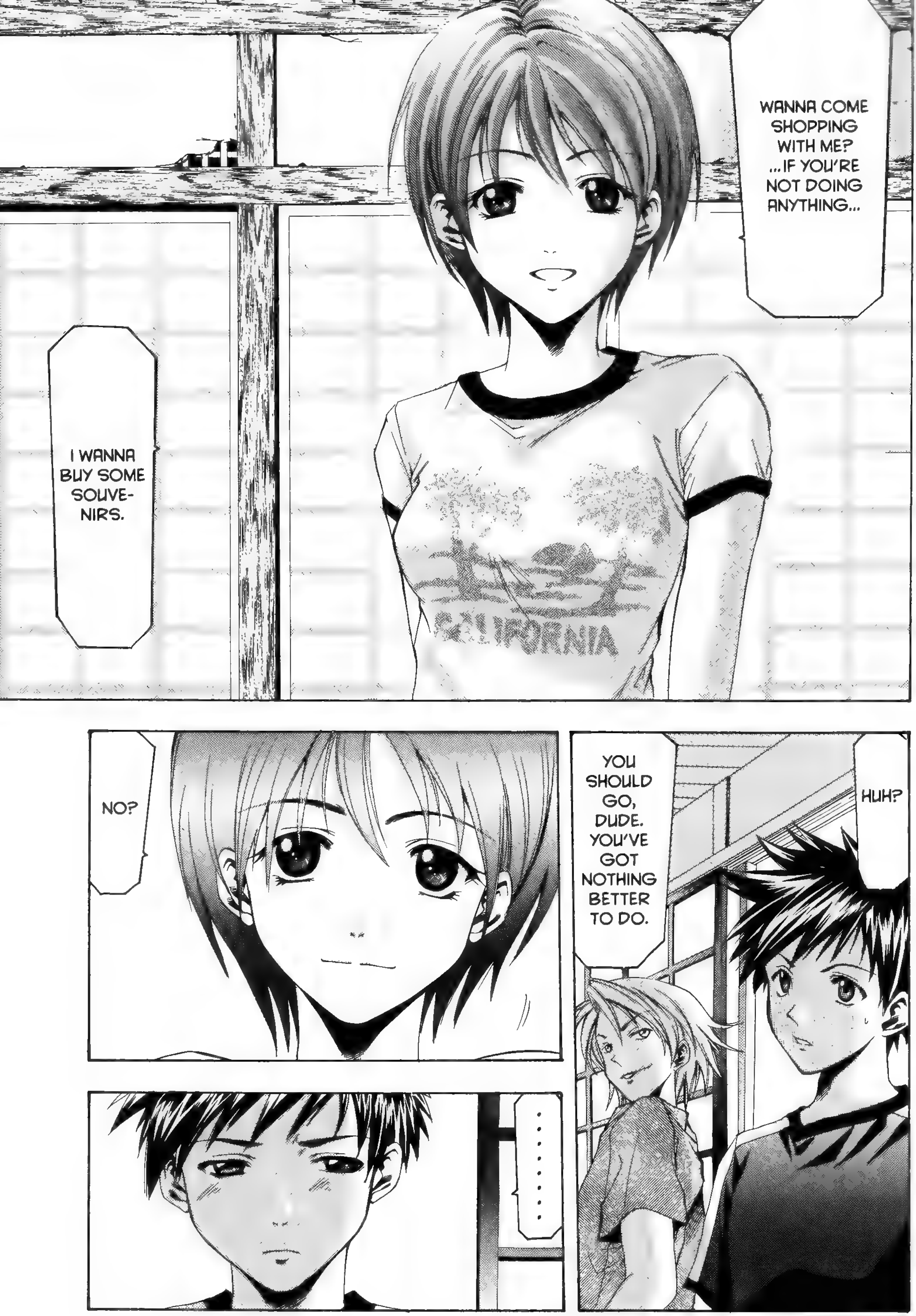

WOW, AN OUTSIDE BATH!
HUH? OH... RIGHT.

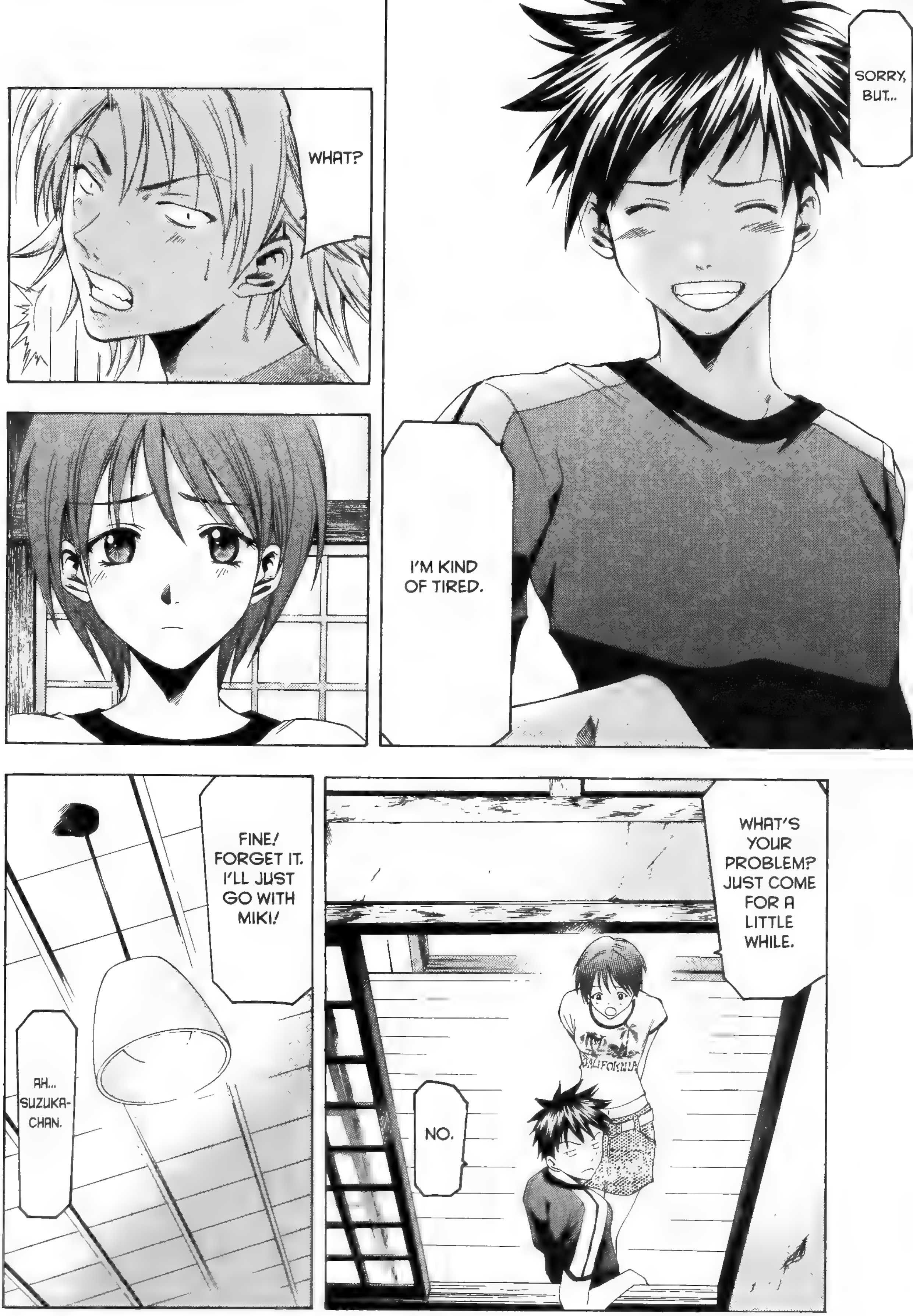

WHAT SHOULD I DO?
SHOULD I TELL SUZUKA?
I'M EXHAUSTED.
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU MISSED AGAIN, ARI.
WHAT? I ONLY MISSED BECAUSE YOU WERE SPACING OUT, MAKI-CHAN.
DON'T BLAME IT ON ME.
DON'T FIGHT, YOU GUYS.
THAT'S RIGHT.
WOW... THOSE GIRLS HAVE SUCH NICE BODIES.
THEY'RE CHEERLEADERS FROM SAINT SOMETHING OR OTHER HIGH SCHOOL.
THEY CAME TO CHEER ON THEIR BASKETBALL TEAM AT THE I.H.
HMM...
THERE'S SOMETHING I SHOULD—
WHOA, COOL! AN OUTSIDE BATH!
YAMATO-KUN?

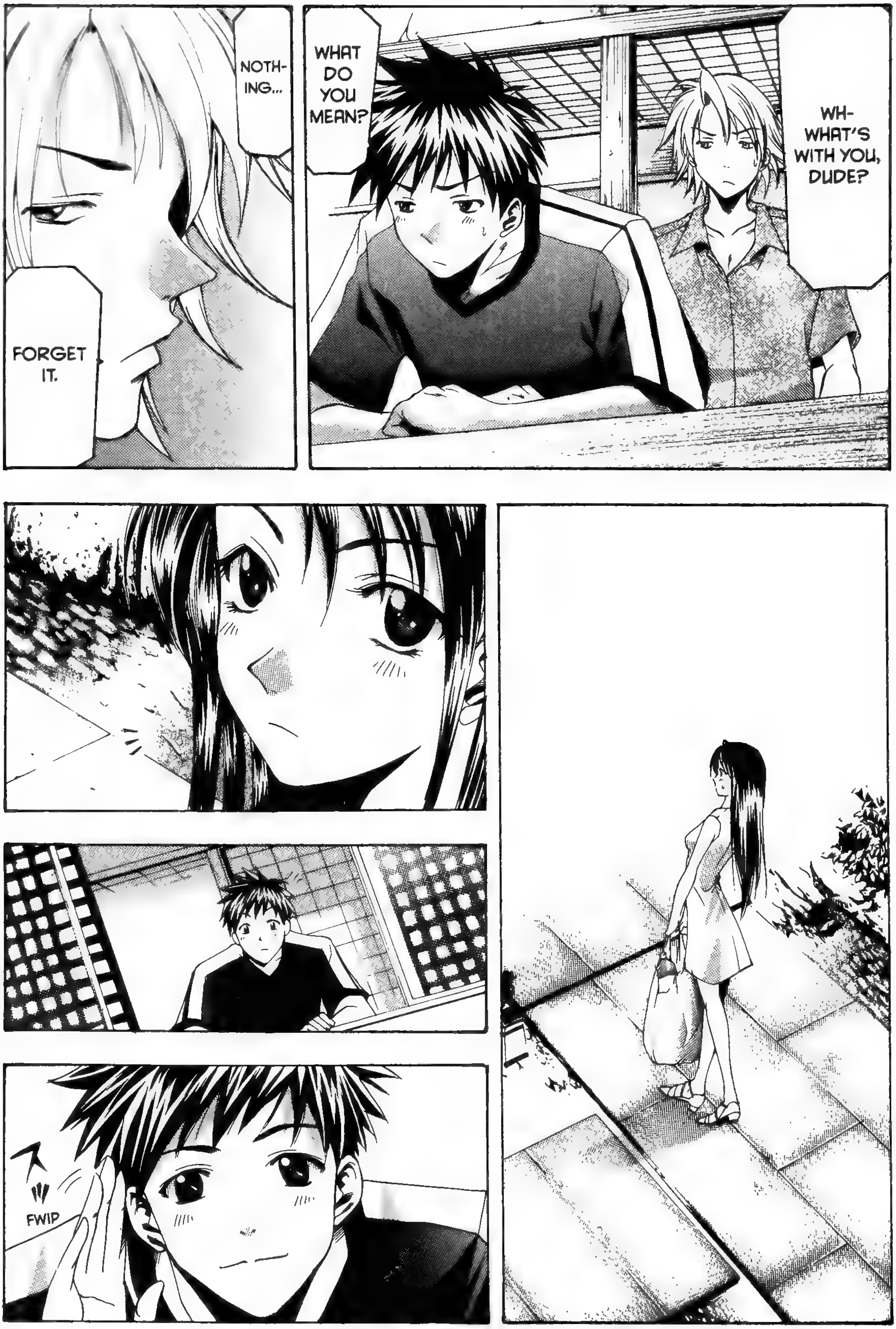

SPLASH
WOO!
THIS IS AWESOME, YASUNOBU! IT'S HUGE!
SPLASH
SPLASH
WHAT'RE YOU SEVEN?
HEY, KEEP IT DOWN!
SHUT UP.
S-SORRY...
OW! MY BUTT HIT BOTTOM!
....
SOUNDS LIKE HE'S DOING BETTER.
HUH?

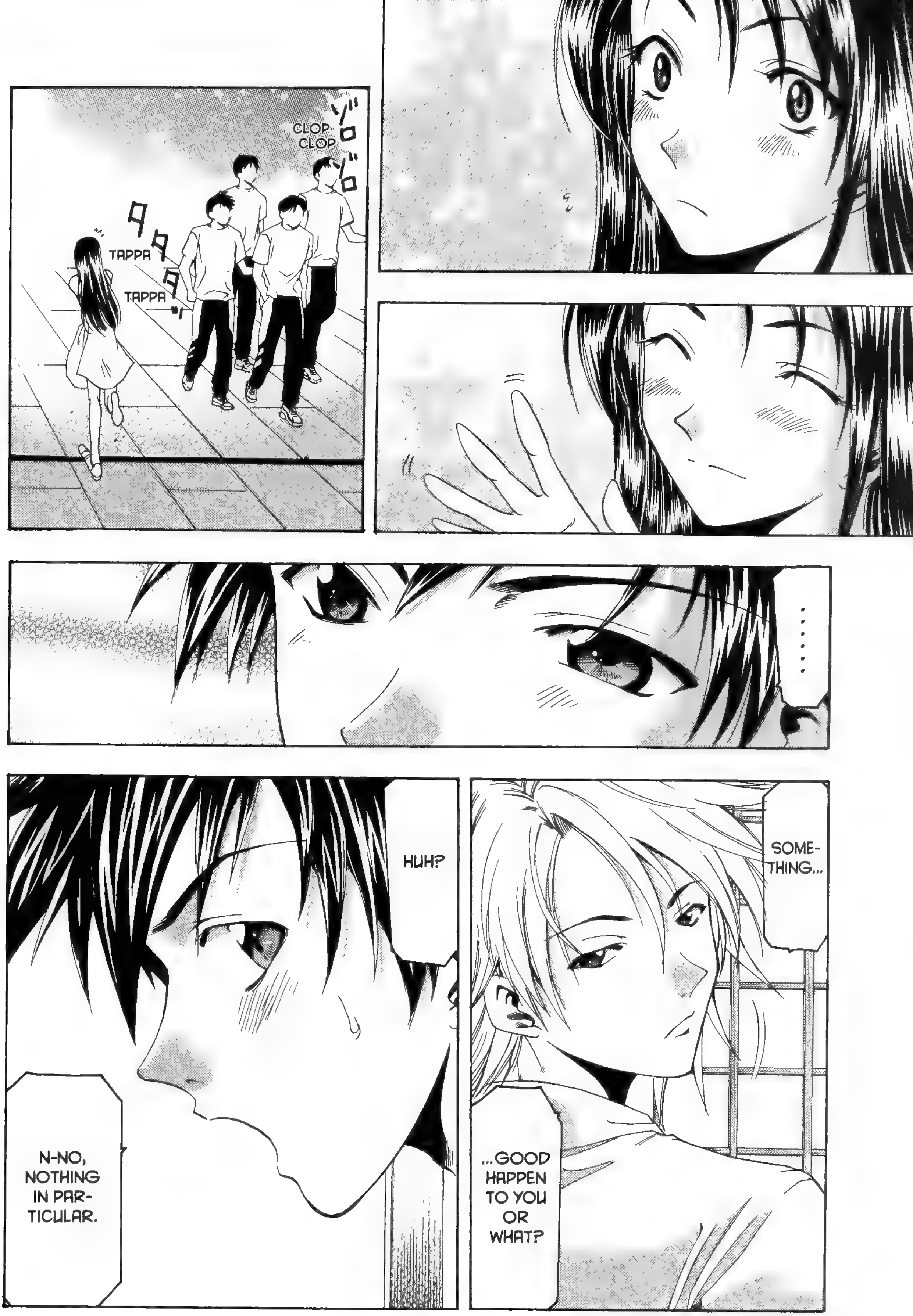

CAN'T HE JUST TAKE A NICE, QUIET BATH THOUGH?
ザザッ
FWAH
GEEZ...
......
MAYBE I SHOULDN'T TELL HER AFTER ALL.
THEN AGAIN...
カポーーーン…
SPLOOSH
AHH! GOD DAMN IT!

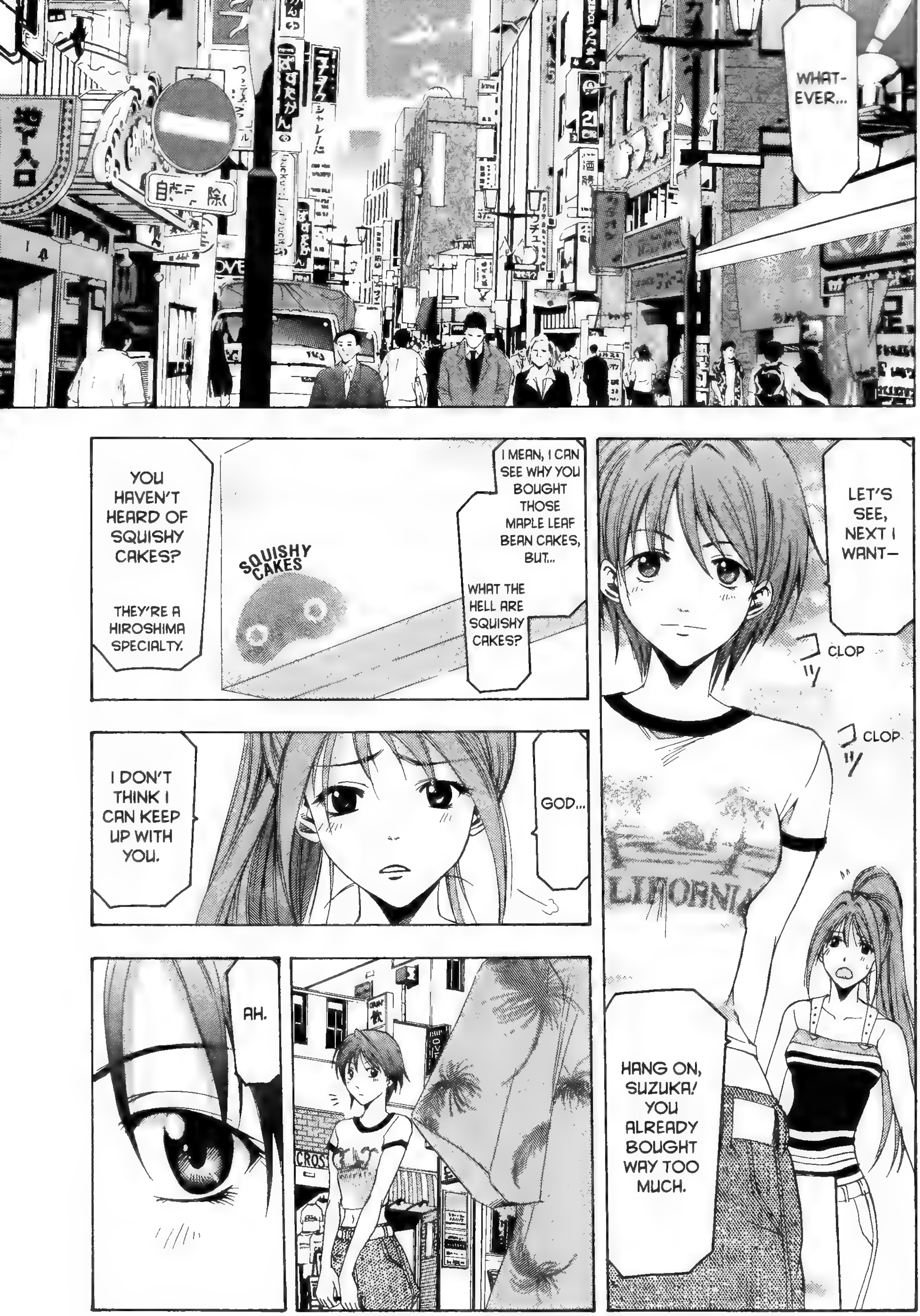

OKITA INN
YAWN
IT'S PRETTY QUIET THIS MORNING, EH?
HUH?
YEAH...THAT'S CAUSE ALL THE SENIORS ARE GOING BACK TO TOKYO.
WE DON'T HAVE PRACTICE TILL THE AFTERNOON.
WHAT'RE YOU STILL DOING HERE ANYWAY?
THE I.H. IS OVER.
JUST KILLING TIME.
BESIDES, I CAN'T GO HOME WITHOUT PICKING UP AT LEAST ONE CHICK.
OH YEAH?
HEY, YAMATO-KUN.

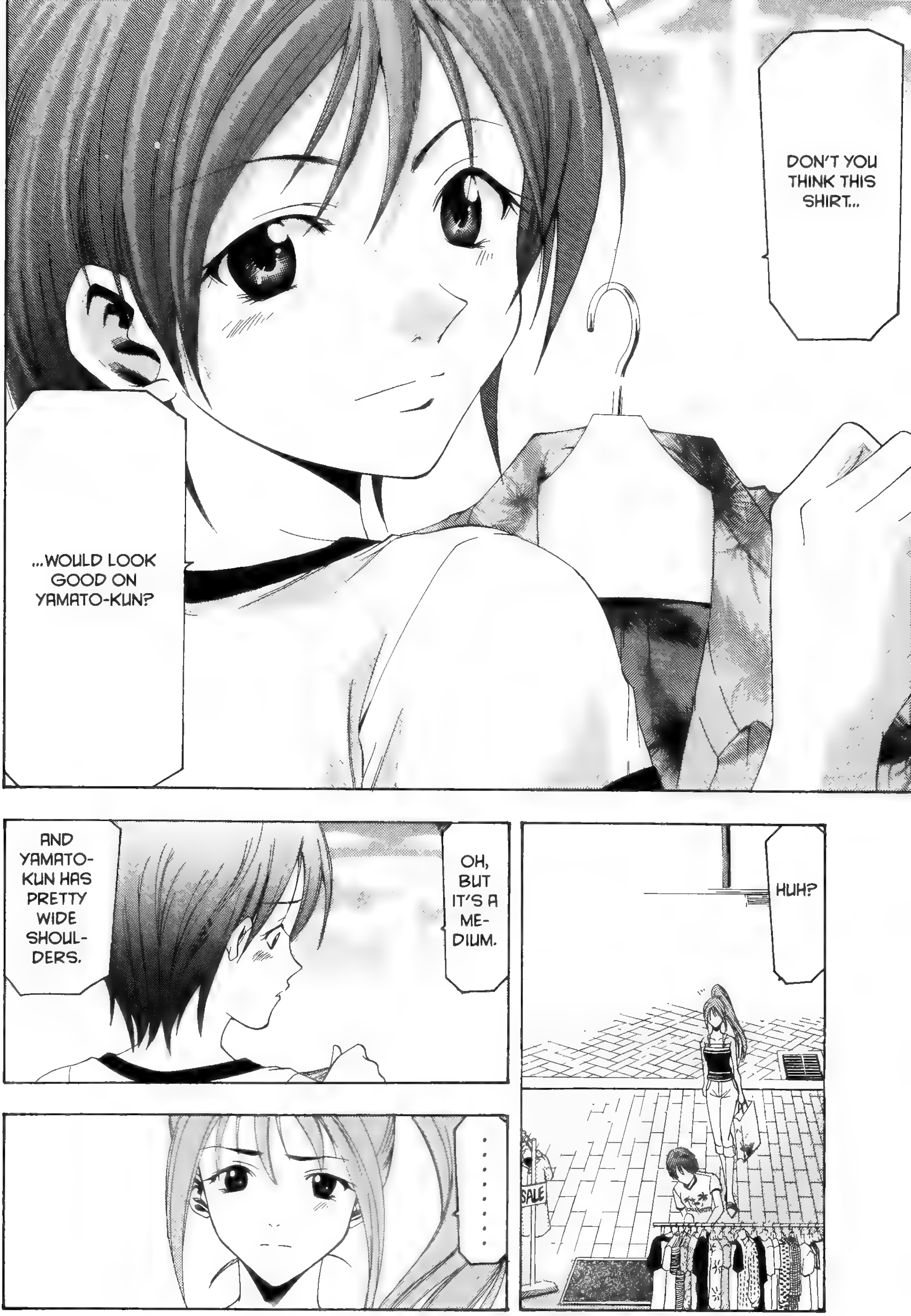

WANNA COME SHOPPING WITH ME? ...IF YOU'RE NOT DOING ANYTHING...
I WANNA BUY SOME SOUVENIRS.
HUH?
YOU SHOULD GO, DUDE. YOU'VE GOT NOTHING BETTER TO DO.
NO?
......

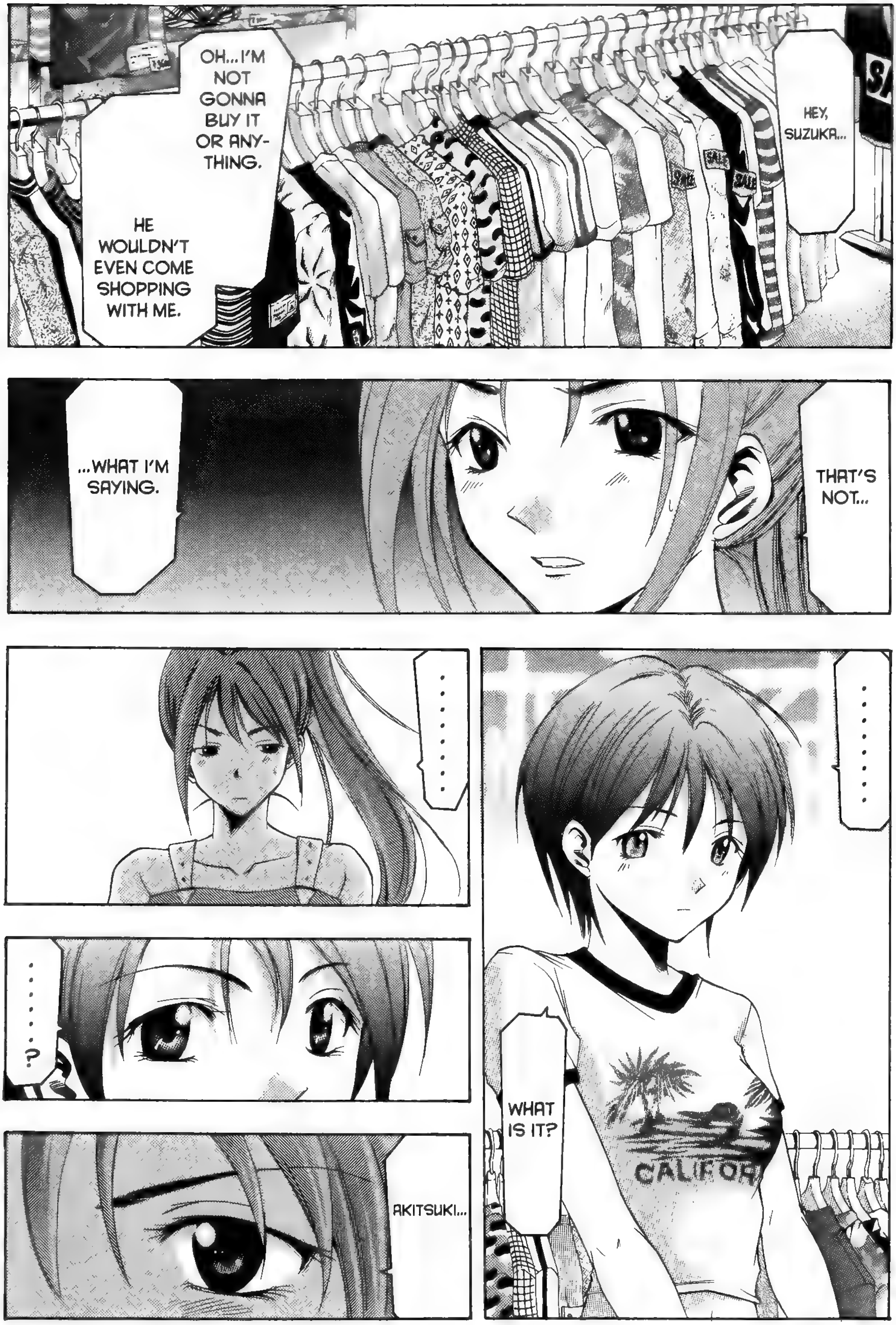

SORRY, BUT...
I'M KIND OF TIRED.
WHAT?
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM? JUST COME FOR A LITTLE WHILE.
NO.
FINE! FORGET IT. I'LL JUST GO WITH MIKI!
AH... SUZUKA-CHAN.

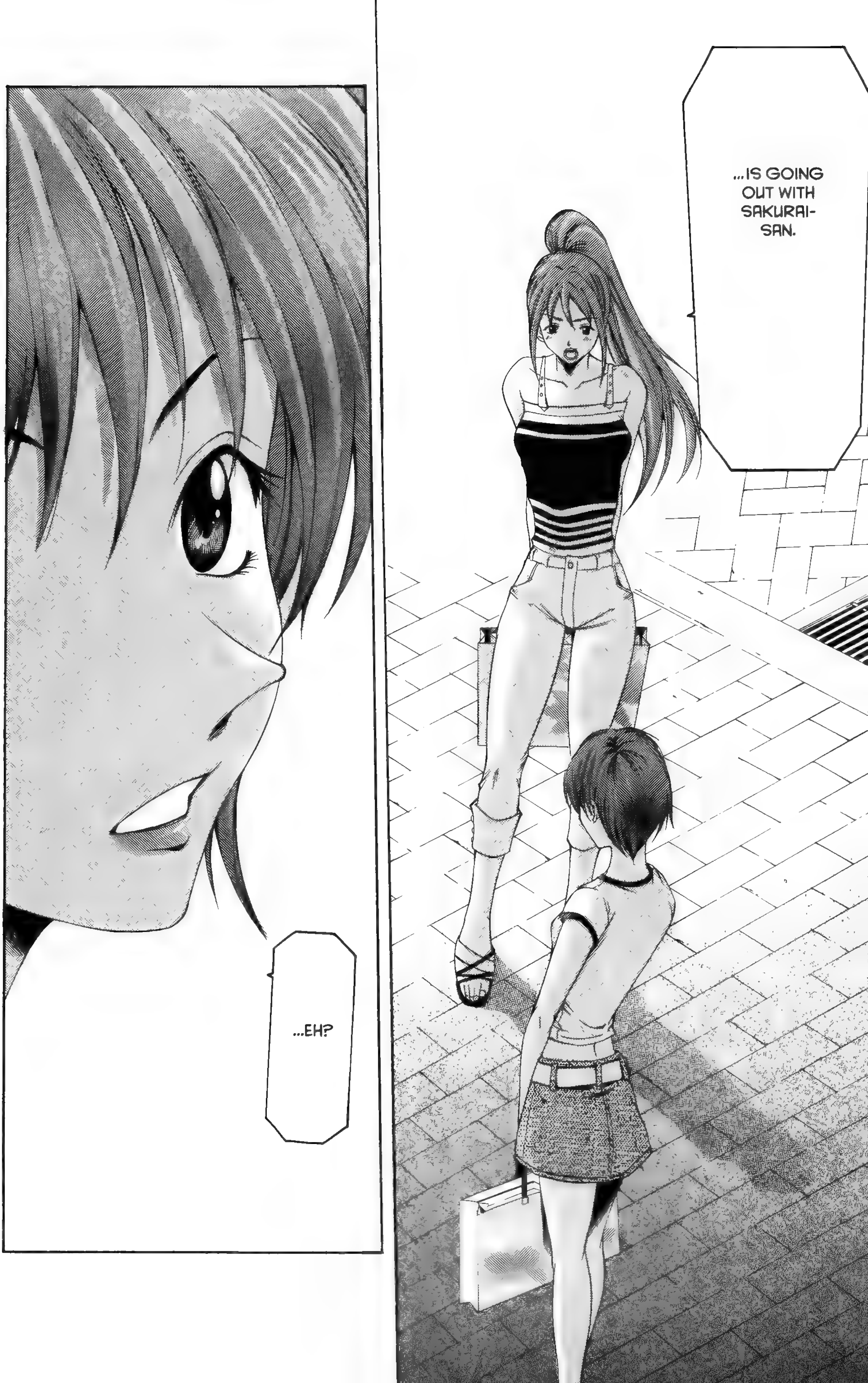

WH- WHAT'S WITH YOU, DUDE?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
NOTHING...
FORGET IT.
ス
FWIP

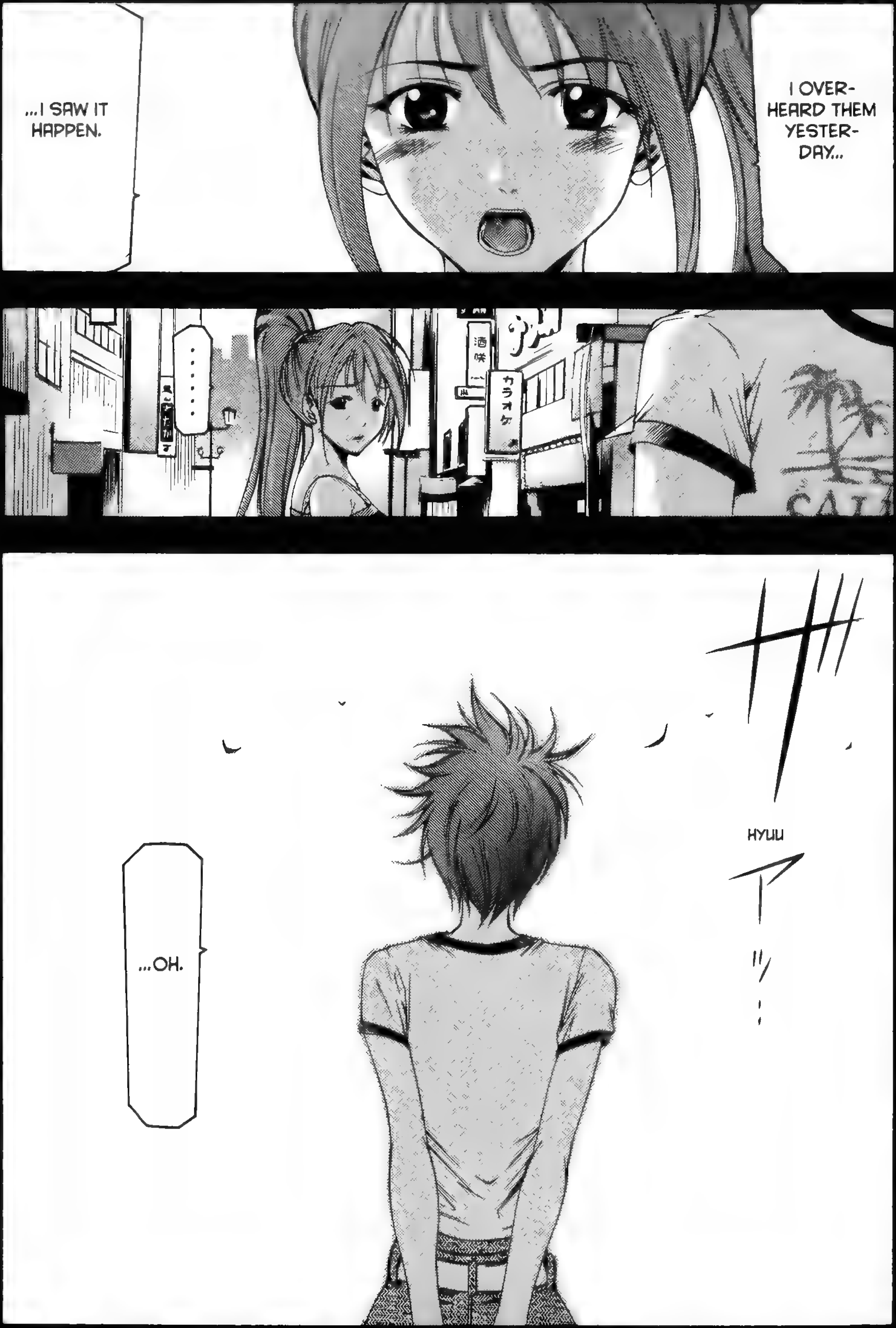

ゾロゾロ
CLOP CLOP
タタタ
TAPPA
TAPPA
......
SOMETHING...
...GOOD HAPPEN TO YOU OR WHAT?
HUH?
N-NO, NOTHING IN PARTICULAR.


WHAT-EVER...
LET'S SEE, NEXT I WANT—
CLOP
CLOP
HANG ON, SUZUKA! YOU ALREADY BOUGHT WAY TOO MUCH.
I MEAN, I CAN SEE WHY YOU BOUGHT THOSE MAPLE LEAF BEAN CAKES, BUT...
WHAT THE HELL ARE SQUISHY CAKES?
SQUISHY CAKES
YOU HAVEN'T HEARD OF SQUISHY CAKES?
THEY'RE A HIROSHIMA SPECIALTY.
GOD...
I DON'T THINK I CAN KEEP UP WITH YOU.
AH.

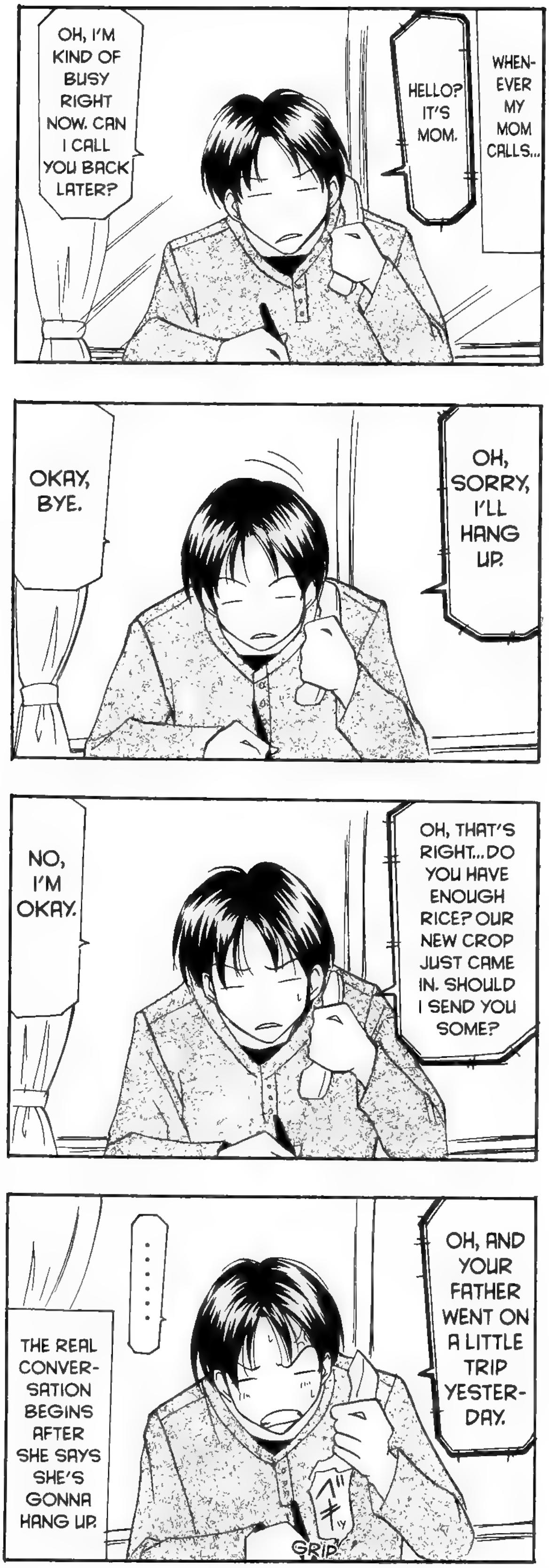

DON'T YOU THINK THIS SHIRT...
...WOULD LOOK GOOD ON YAMATO-KUN?
HUH?
SALE
OH, BUT IT'S A MEDIUM.
AND YAMATO-KUN HAS PRETTY WIDE SHOULDERS.
......

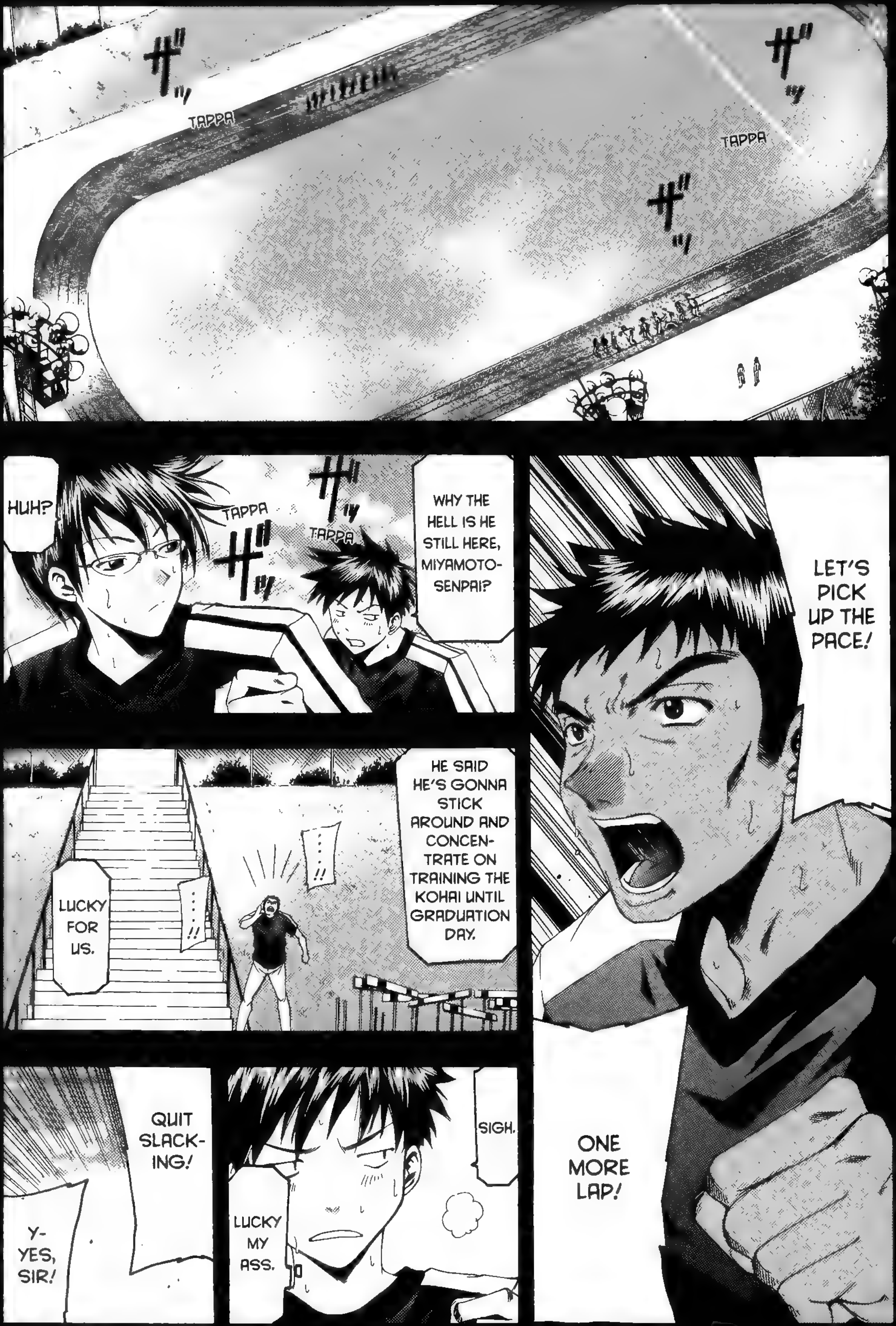

HEY, SUZUKA...
OH... I'M NOT GONNA BUY IT OR ANYTHING.
HE WOULDN'T EVEN COME SHOPPING WITH ME.
THAT'S NOT...
...WHAT I'M SAYING.
....
WHAT IS IT?
....
......?
AKITSUKI...


...IS GOING OUT WITH SAKURAI-SAN.
...EH?

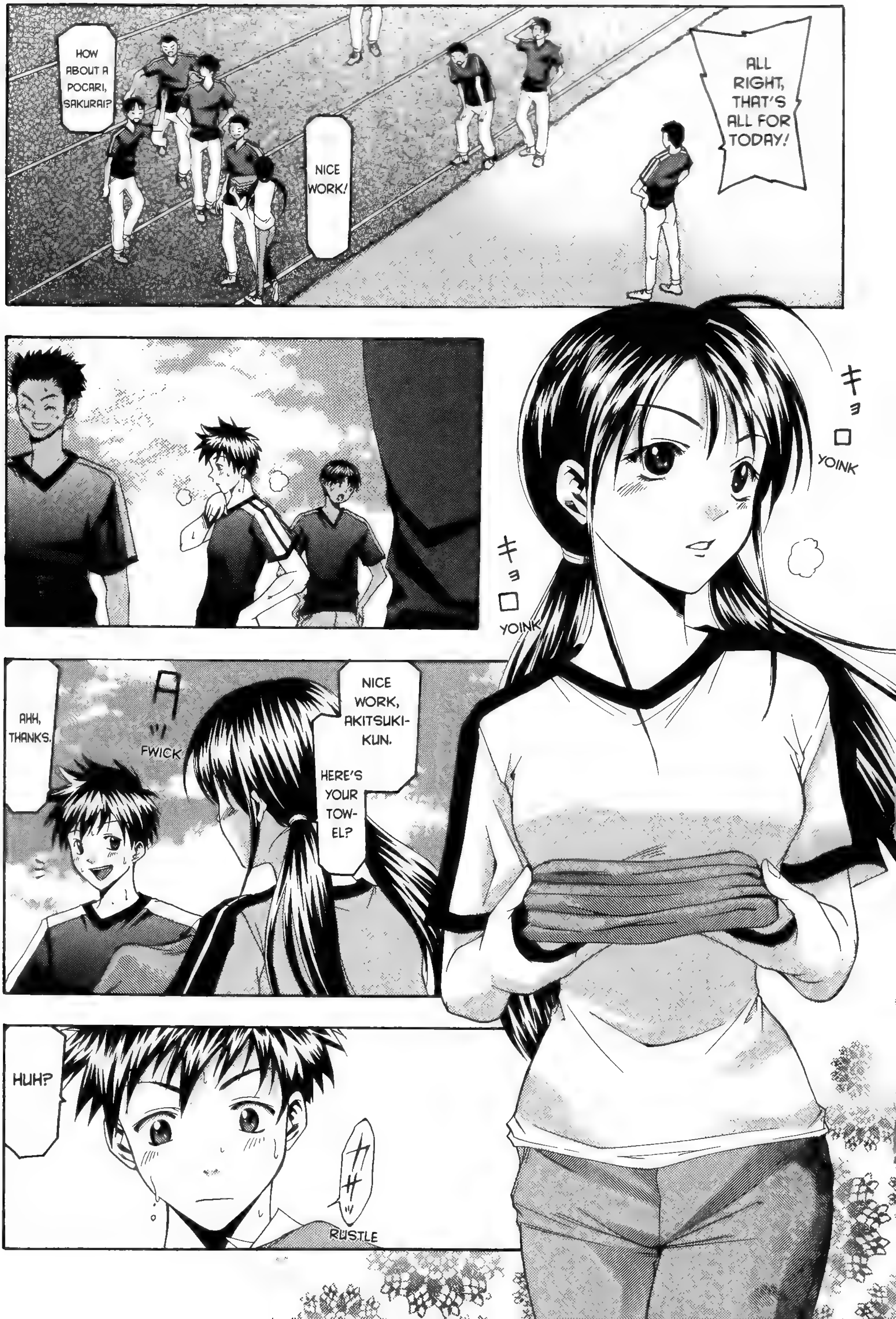

I OVER-HEARD THEM YESTER-DAY...
...I SAW IT HAPPEN.
......
カラオケ
HYUU
アッ！
...OH.

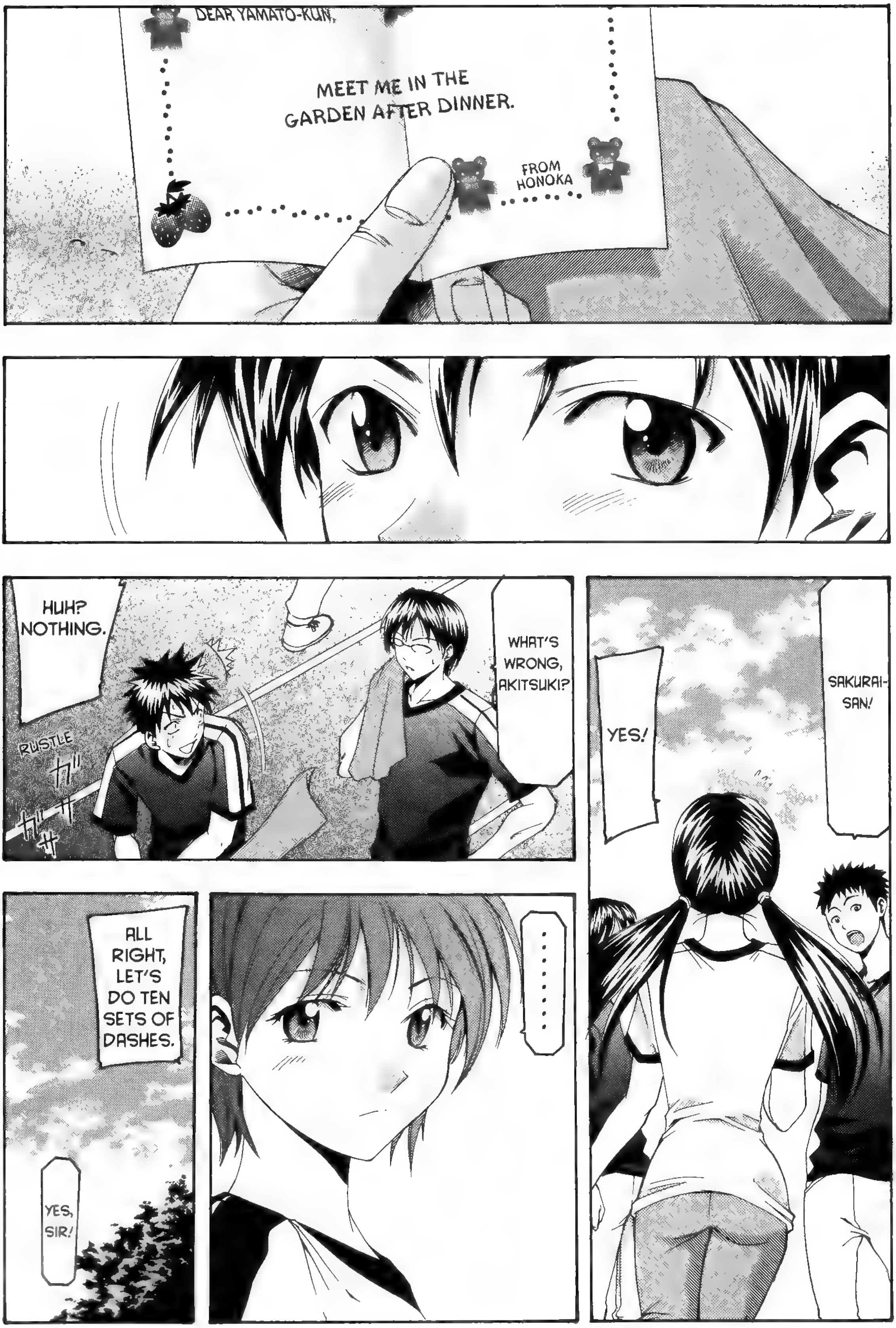
SUZUKA
FOUR-PANEL THEATER
NUMBER TWENTY-ONE
MOTHER

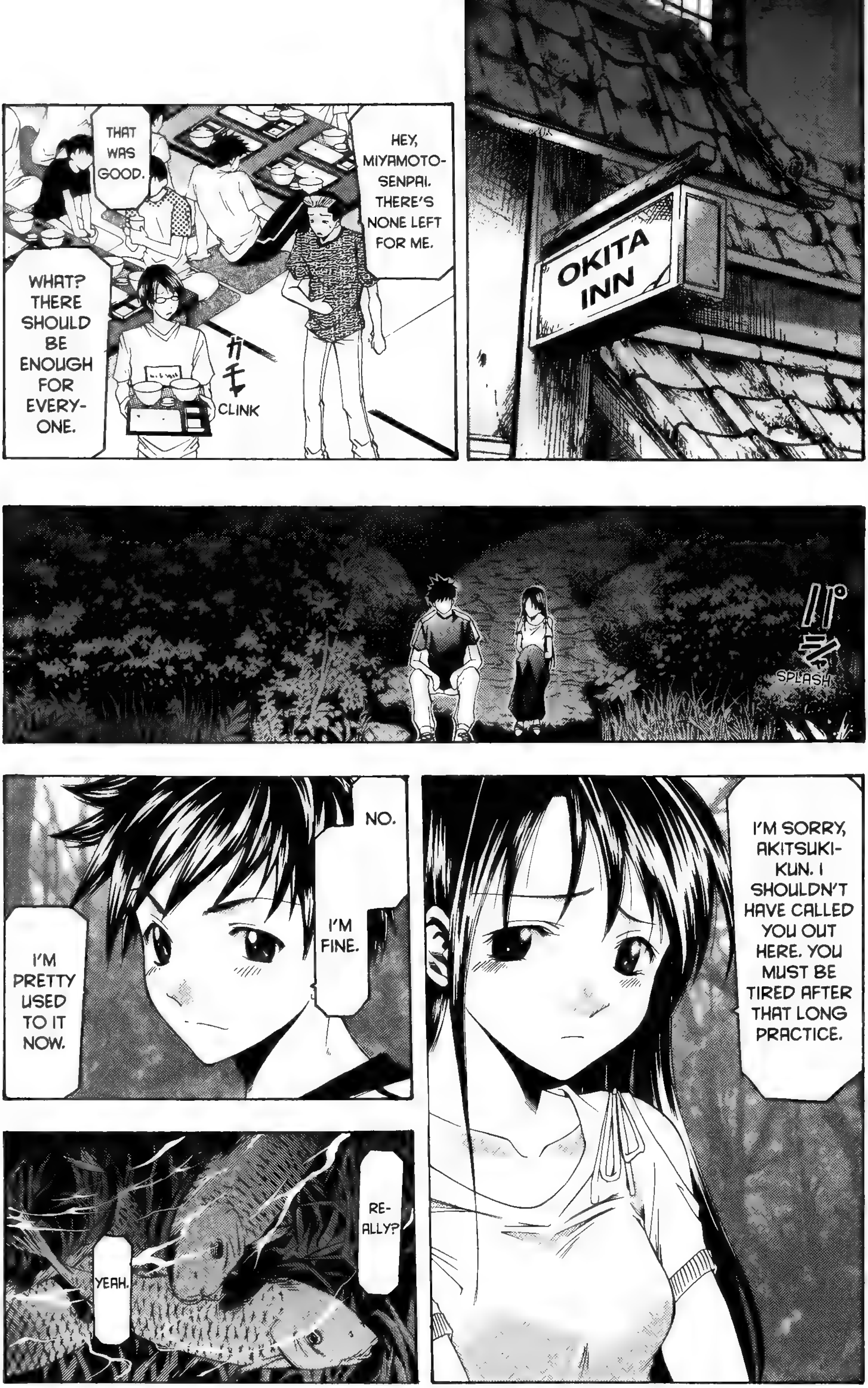

WHENEVER MY MOM CALLS...
HELLO? IT'S MOM.
OH, I'M KIND OF BUSY RIGHT NOW. CAN I CALL YOU BACK LATER?
OH, SORRY, I'LL HANG UP.
OKAY, BYE.
OH, THAT'S RIGHT...DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH RICE? OUR NEW CROP JUST CAME IN. SHOULD I SEND YOU SOME?
NO, I'M OKAY.
OH, AND YOUR FATHER WENT ON A LITTLE TRIP YESTERDAY.
....
THE REAL CONVERSATION BEGINS AFTER SHE SAYS SHE'S GONNA HANG UP.
GRIP

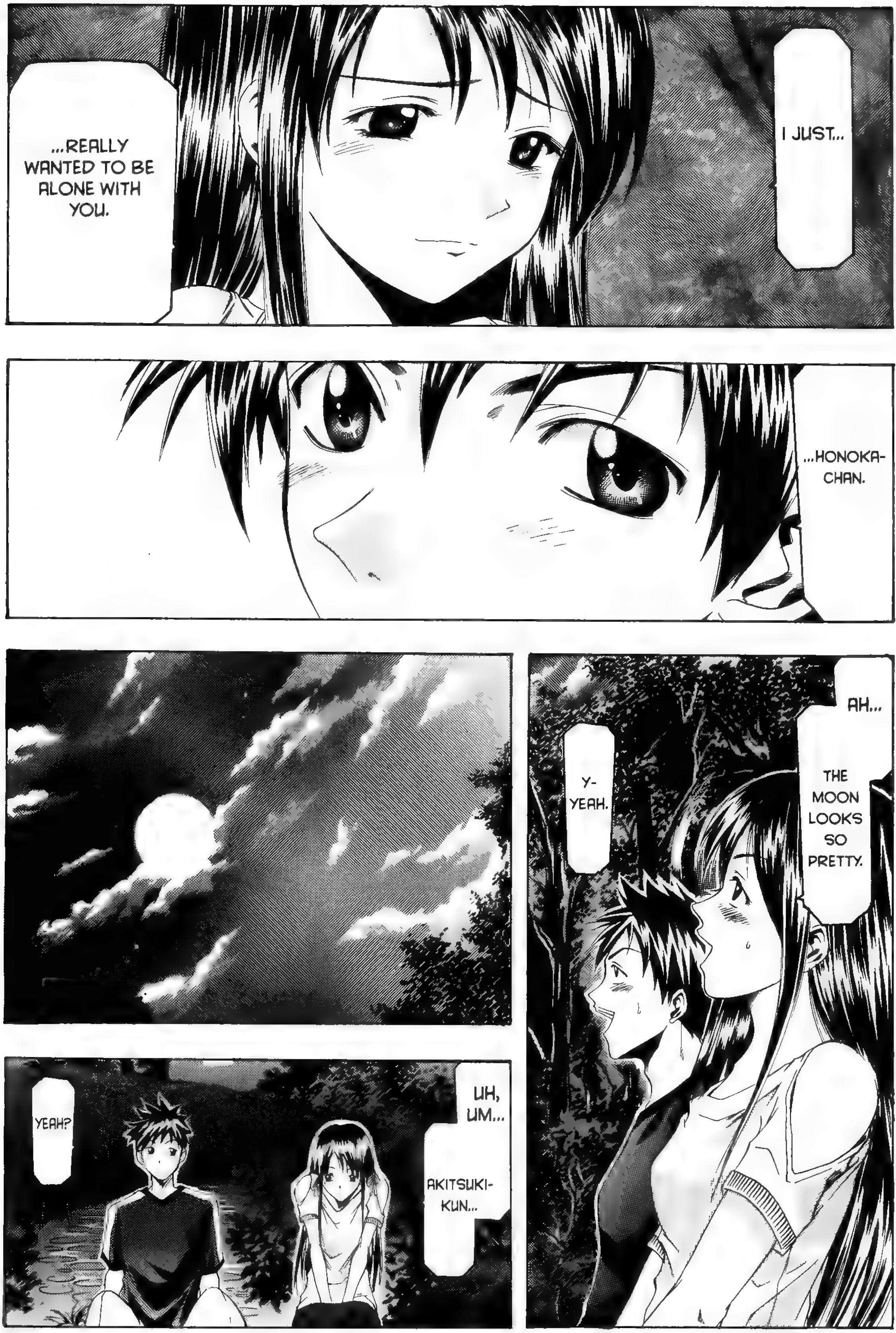

ザッ
TAPPA
ザッ
TAPPA
ザッ
LET'S PICK UP THE PACE!
ONE MORE LAP!
ザッ
TAPPA
ザッ
TAPPA
WHY THE HELL IS HE STILL HERE, MIYAMOTO-SENPAI?
HUH?
HE SAID HE'S GONNA STICK AROUND AND CONCENTRATE ON TRAINING THE KOHAI UNTIL GRADUATION DAY.
……!!
……!!
LUCKY FOR US.
SIGH.
LUCKY MY ASS.
QUIT SLACKING!
Y-YES, SIR!

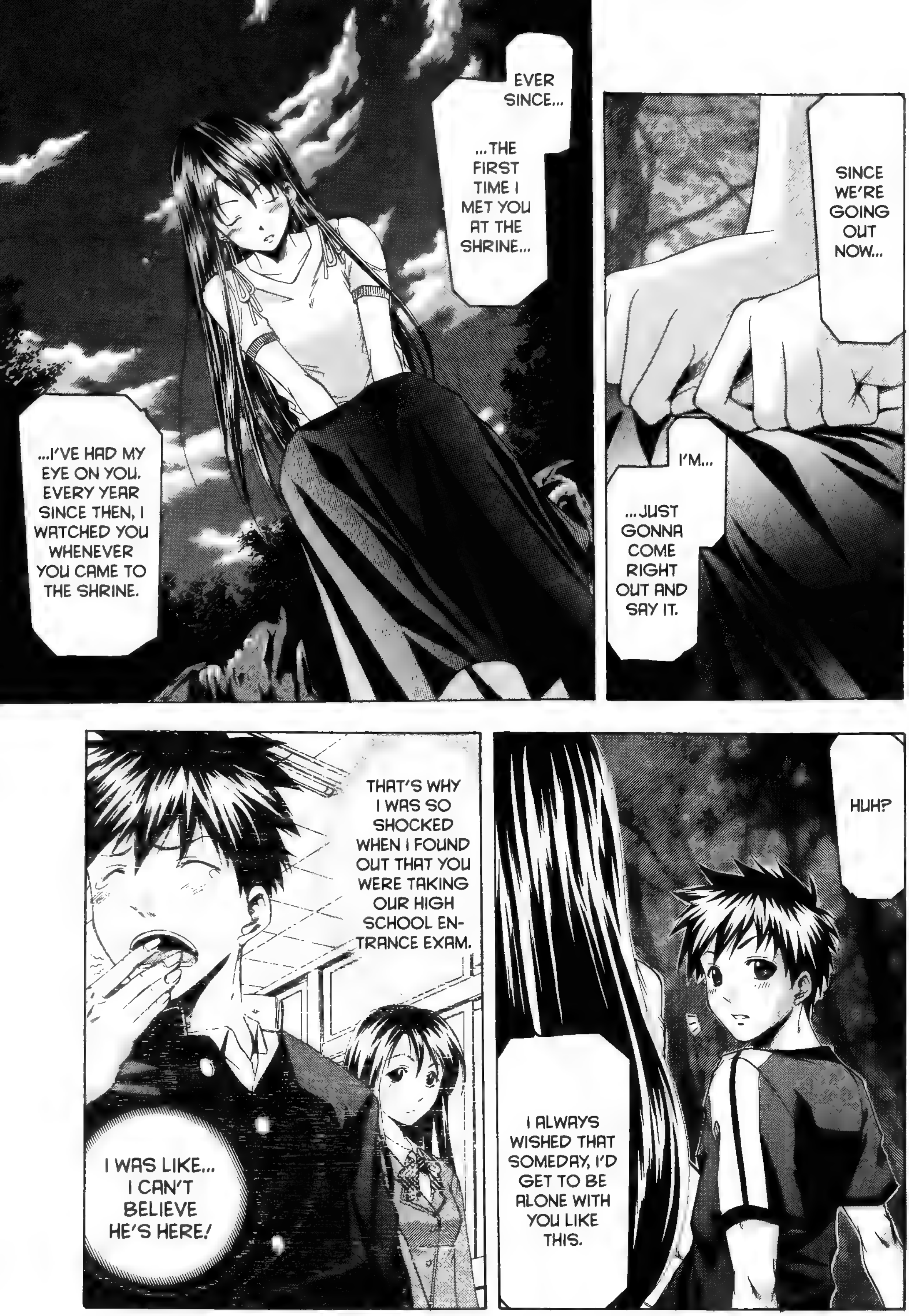
#37 CELEBRATION

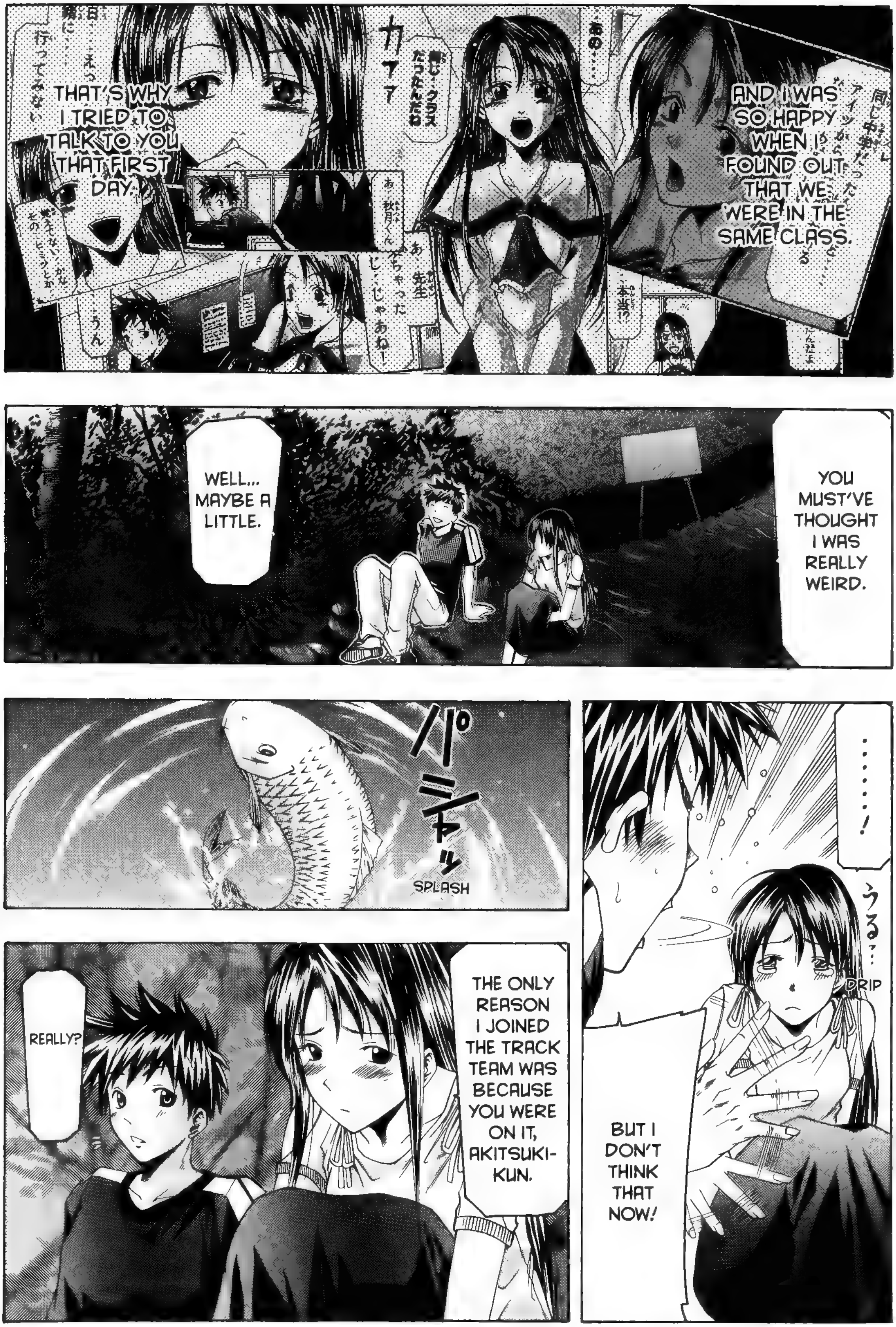

ALL RIGHT, THAT'S ALL FOR TODAY!
NICE WORK!
HOW ABOUT A POCARI, SAKURAI?
キョロ
YOINK
キョロ
YOINK
NICE WORK, AKITSUKI-KUN.
HERE'S YOUR TOWEL?
ハッ
FWICK
AHH, THANKS.
カサッ
RUSTLE
HUH?

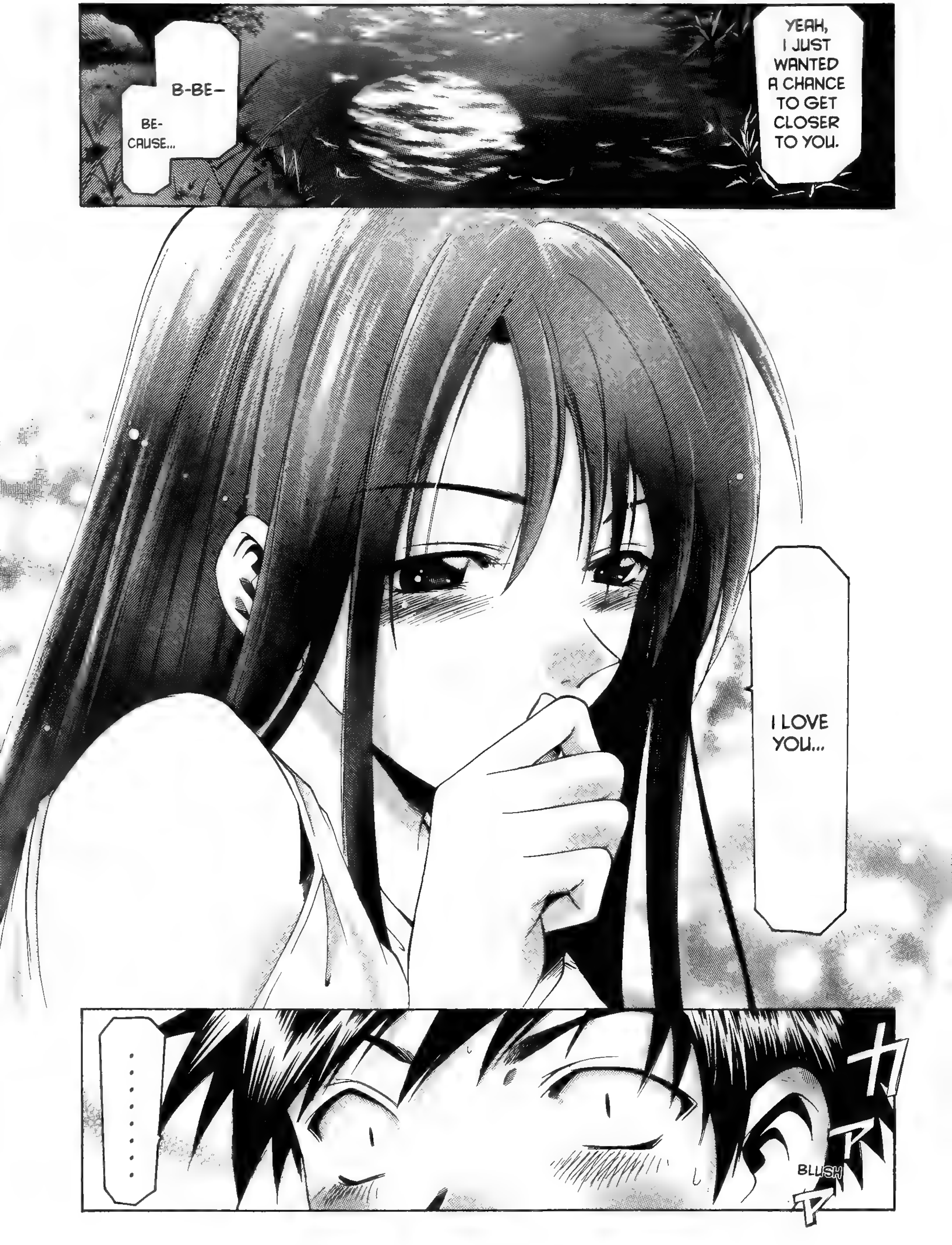

DEAR YAMATO-KUN,
MEET ME IN THE GARDEN AFTER DINNER.
FROM HONOKA
WHAT'S WRONG, AKITSUKI?
HUH? NOTHING.
RUSTLE
ガサ ガサ
SAKURAI-SAN!
YES!
……
ALL RIGHT, LET'S DO TEN SETS OF DASHES.
YES, SIR!

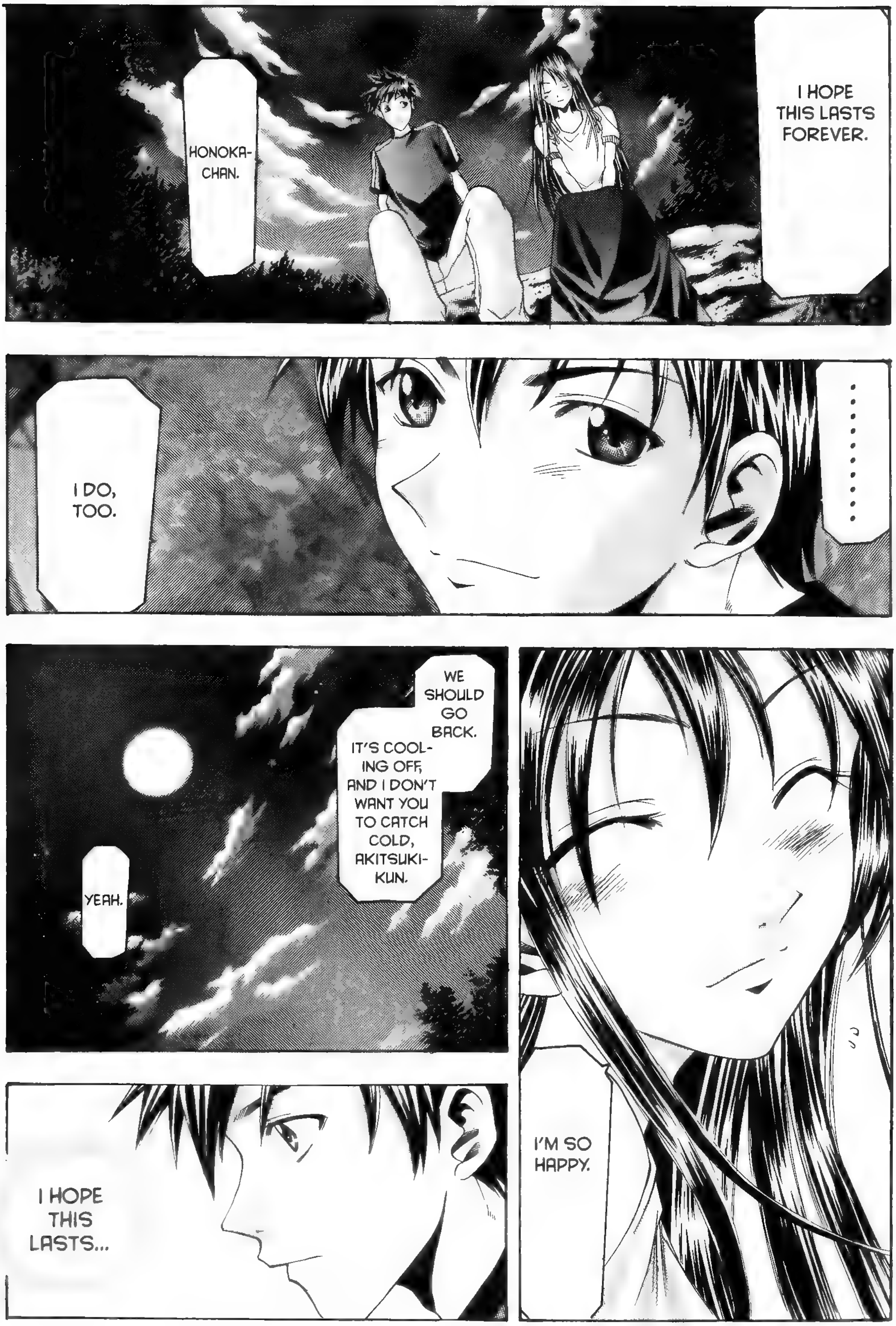

OKITA INN
THAT WAS GOOD.
HEY, MIYAMOTO-SENPAI. THERE'S NONE LEFT FOR ME.
WHAT? THERE SHOULD BE ENOUGH FOR EVERYONE.
ガチ
CLINK
パシャ
SPLASH
I'M SORRY, AKITSUKI-KUN. I SHOULDN'T HAVE CALLED YOU OUT HERE. YOU MUST BE TIRED AFTER THAT LONG PRACTICE.
NO.
I'M FINE.
I'M PRETTY USED TO IT NOW.
REALLY?
YEAH.

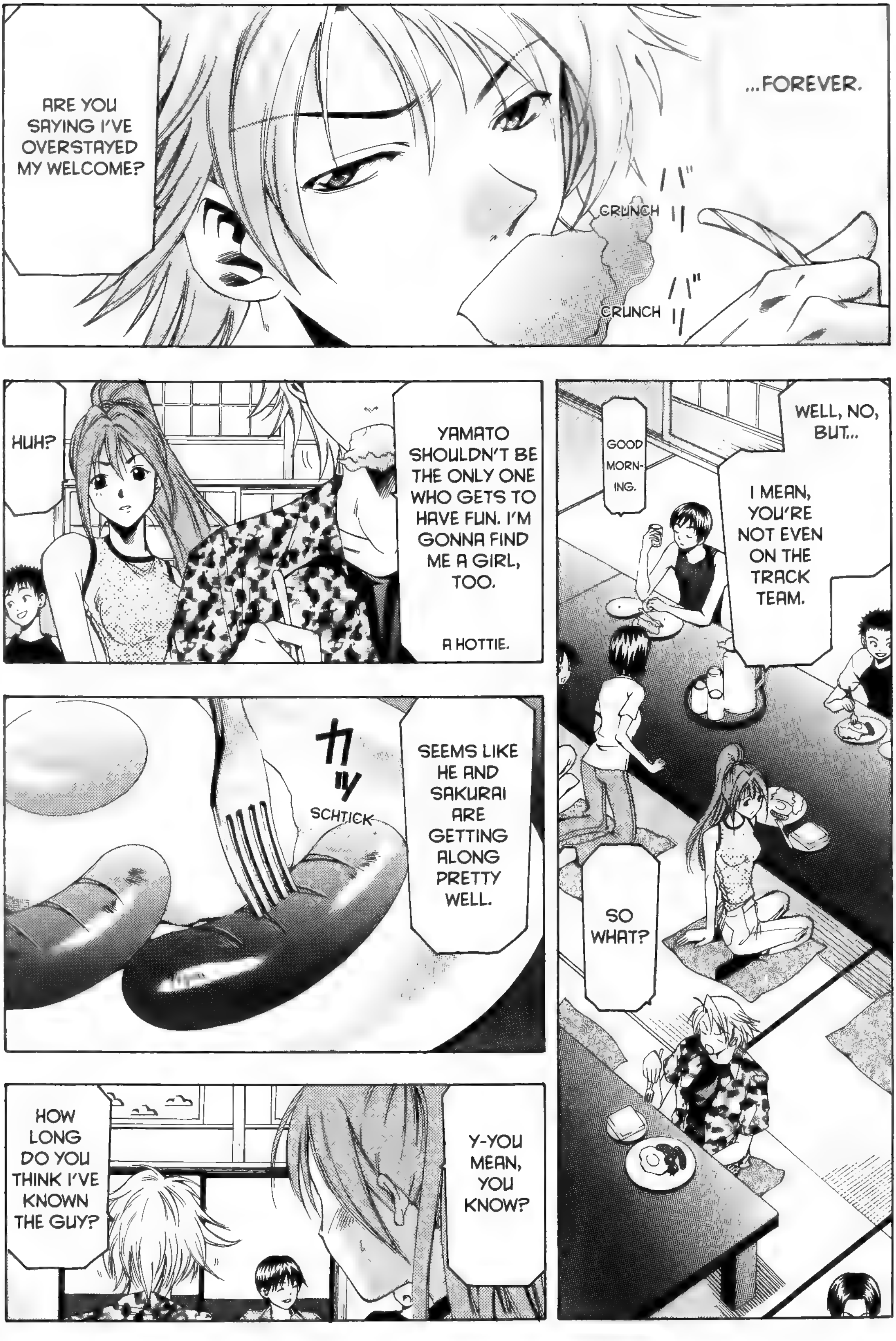

I JUST...
...REALLY WANTED TO BE ALONE WITH YOU.
...HONOKA-CHAN.
AH...
THE MOON LOOKS SO PRETTY.
Y-YEAH.
UH, UM...
AKITSUKI-KUN...
YEAH?

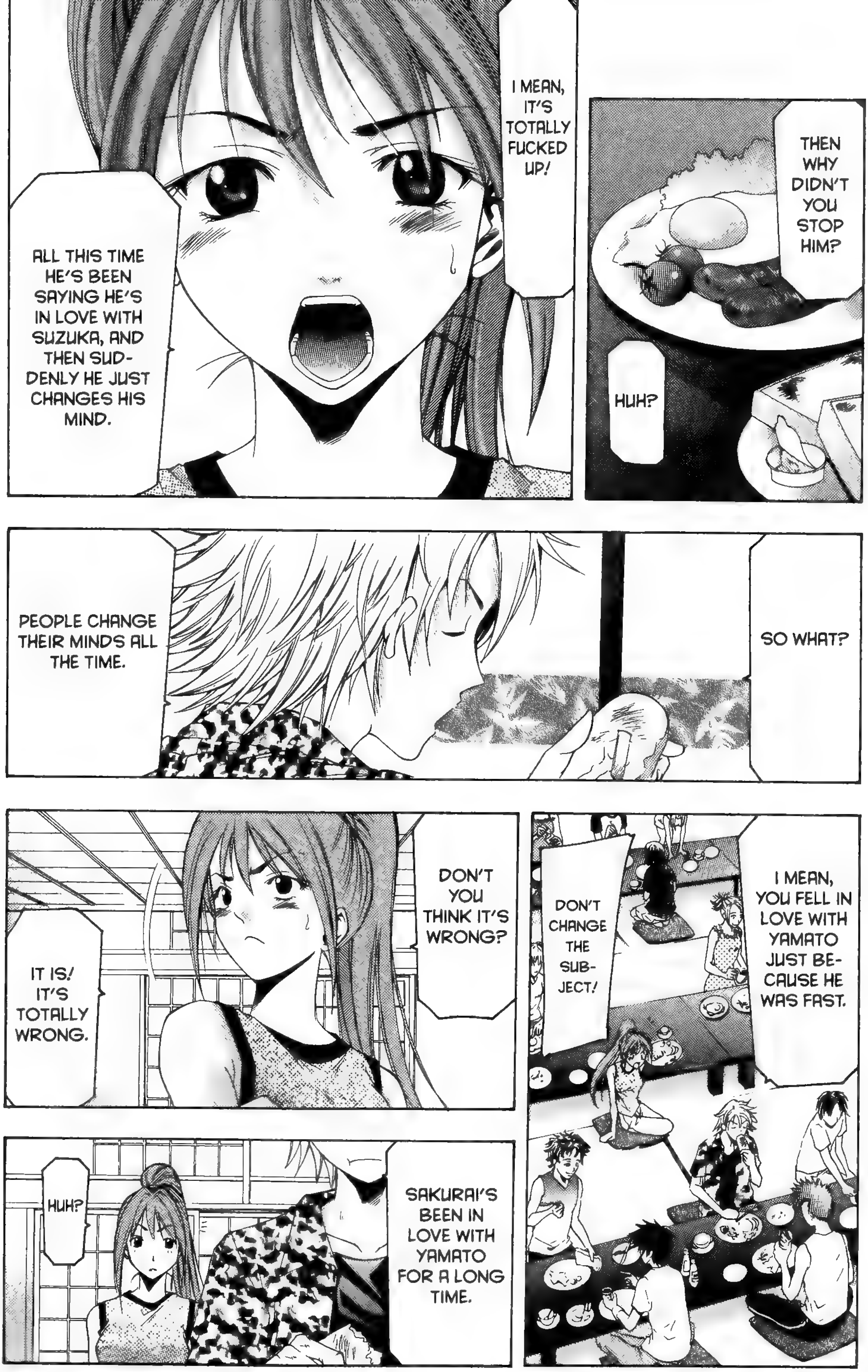

SINCE WE'RE GOING OUT NOW...
I'M...
...JUST GONNA COME RIGHT OUT AND SAY IT.
EVER SINCE...
...THE FIRST TIME I MET YOU AT THE SHRINE...
...I'VE HAD MY EYE ON YOU. EVERY YEAR SINCE THEN, I WATCHED YOU WHENEVER YOU CAME TO THE SHRINE.
HUH?
I ALWAYS WISHED THAT SOMEDAY, I'D GET TO BE ALONE WITH YOU LIKE THIS.
THAT'S WHY I WAS SO SHOCKED WHEN I FOUND OUT THAT YOU WERE TAKING OUR HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAM.
I WAS LIKE... I CAN'T BELIEVE HE'S HERE!

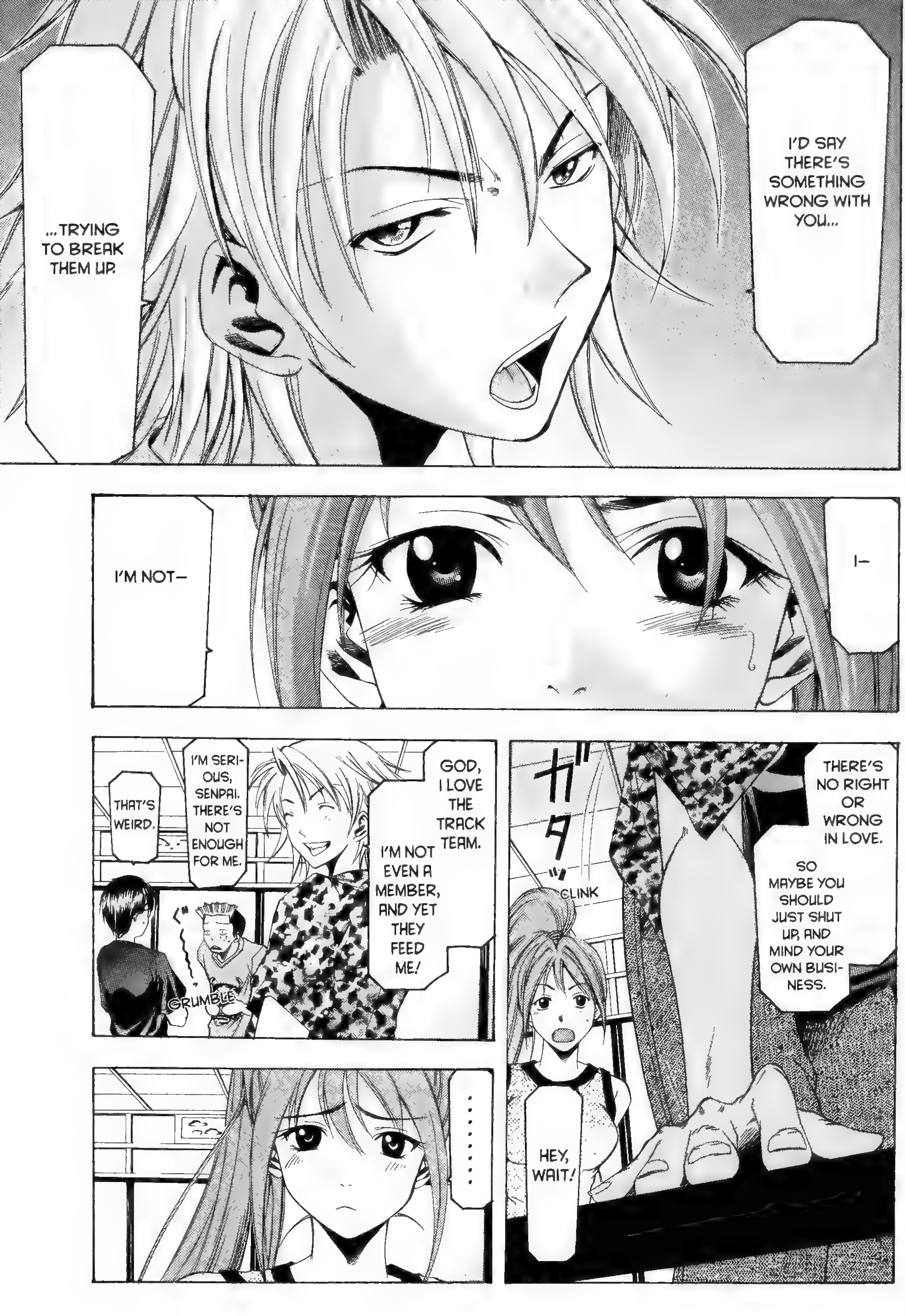

AND I WAS SO HAPPY WHEN I FOUND OUT THAT WE WERE IN THE SAME CLASS.
本当!?
あの……
カァァ
うん
THAT'S WHY I TRIED TO TALK TO YOU THAT FIRST DAY.
YOU MUST'VE THOUGHT I WAS REALLY WEIRD.
WELL... MAYBE A LITTLE.
パシャッ
SPLASH
THE ONLY REASON I JOINED THE TRACK TEAM WAS BECAUSE YOU WERE ON IT, AKITSUKI-KUN.
REALLY?
......!
うる…
DRIP
BUT I DON'T THINK THAT NOW!

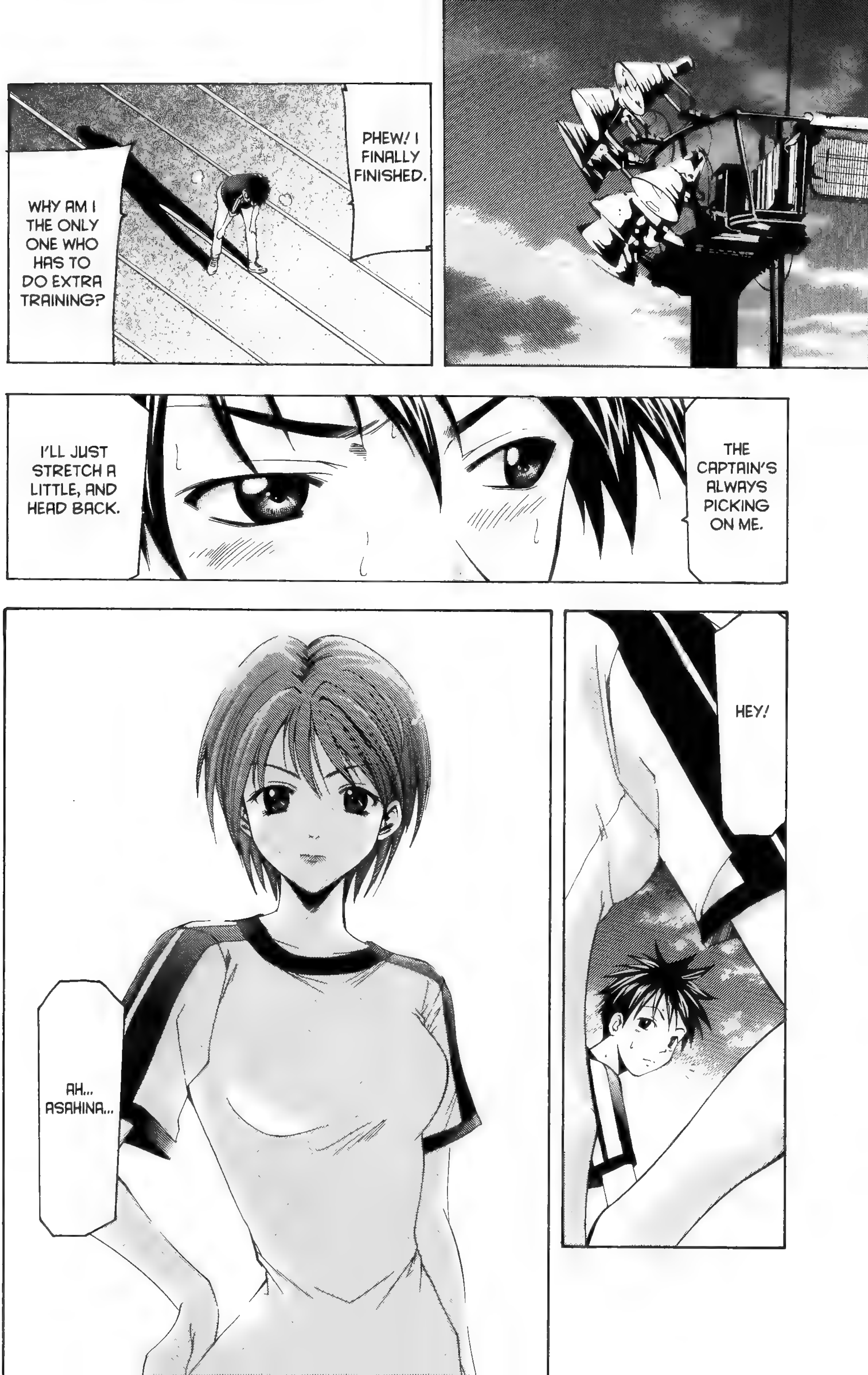

YEAH, I JUST WANTED A CHANCE TO GET CLOSER TO YOU.
B-BE—
BE-CAUSE...
I LOVE YOU...
カァ
BLUSH
......

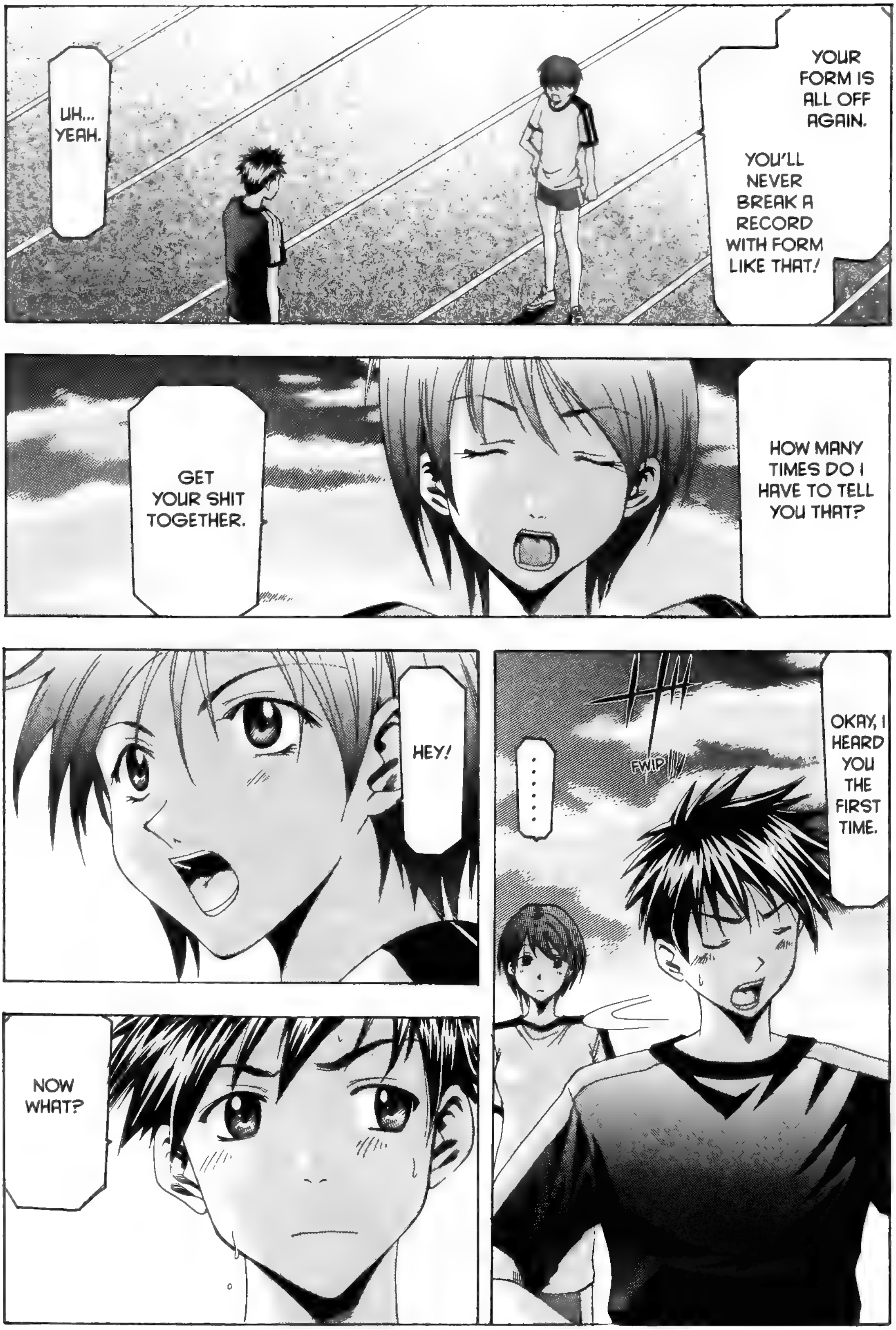

I HOPE THIS LASTS FOREVER.
HONOKA-CHAN.
……
I DO, TOO.
WE SHOULD GO BACK.
IT'S COOLING OFF, AND I DON'T WANT YOU TO CATCH COLD, AKITSUKI-KUN.
YEAH.
I'M SO HAPPY.
I HOPE THIS LASTS...

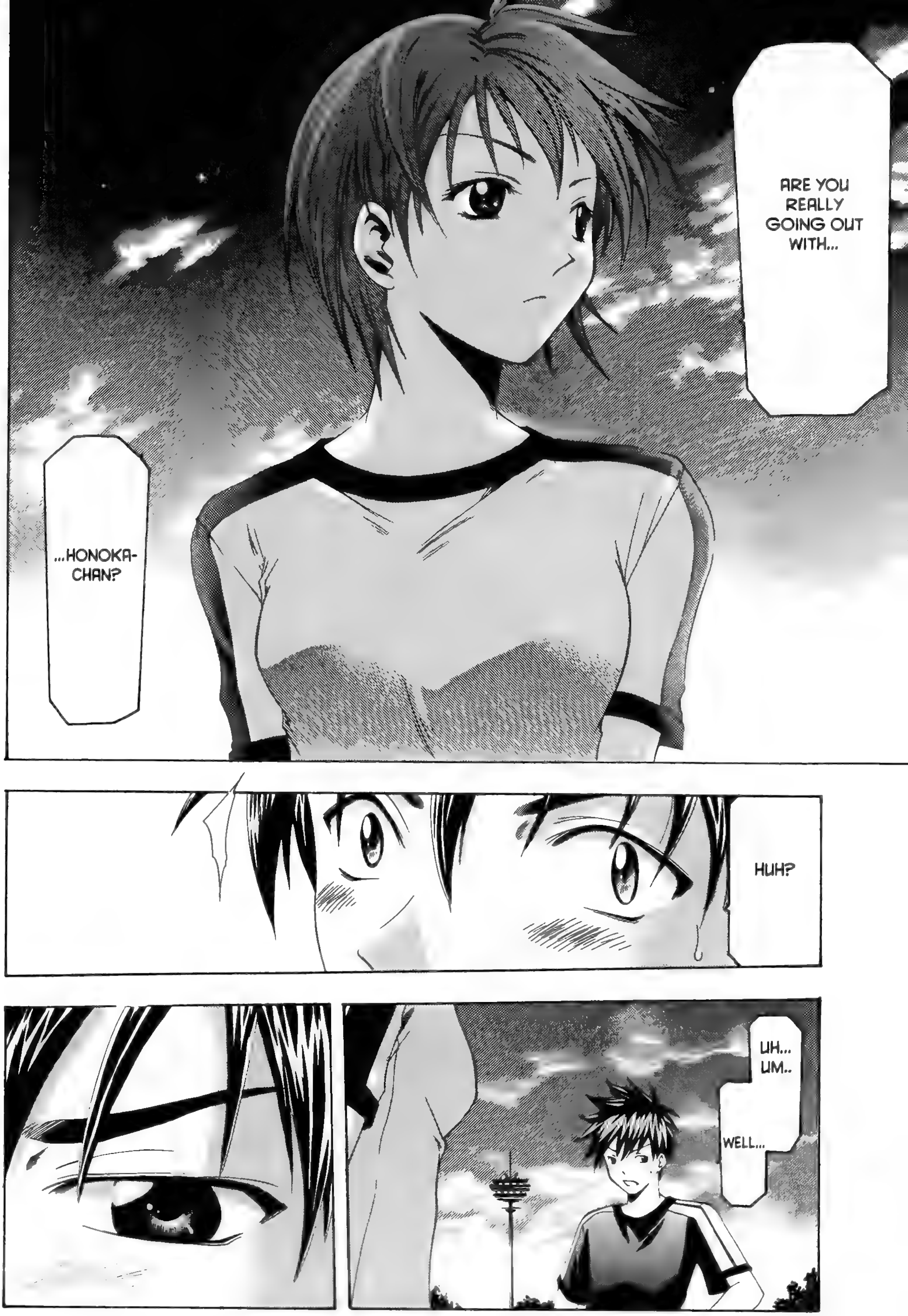

...FOREVER.
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
ARE YOU SAYING I'VE OVERSTAYED MY WELCOME?
WELL, NO, BUT...
I MEAN, YOU'RE NOT EVEN ON THE TRACK TEAM.
GOOD MORNING.
SO WHAT?
YAMATO SHOULDN'T BE THE ONLY ONE WHO GETS TO HAVE FUN. I'M GONNA FIND ME A GIRL, TOO.
A HOTTIE.
HUH?
SEEMS LIKE HE AND SAKURAI ARE GETTING ALONG PRETTY WELL.
カッ
SCHTICK
Y-YOU MEAN, YOU KNOW?
HOW LONG DO YOU THINK I'VE KNOWN THE GUY?

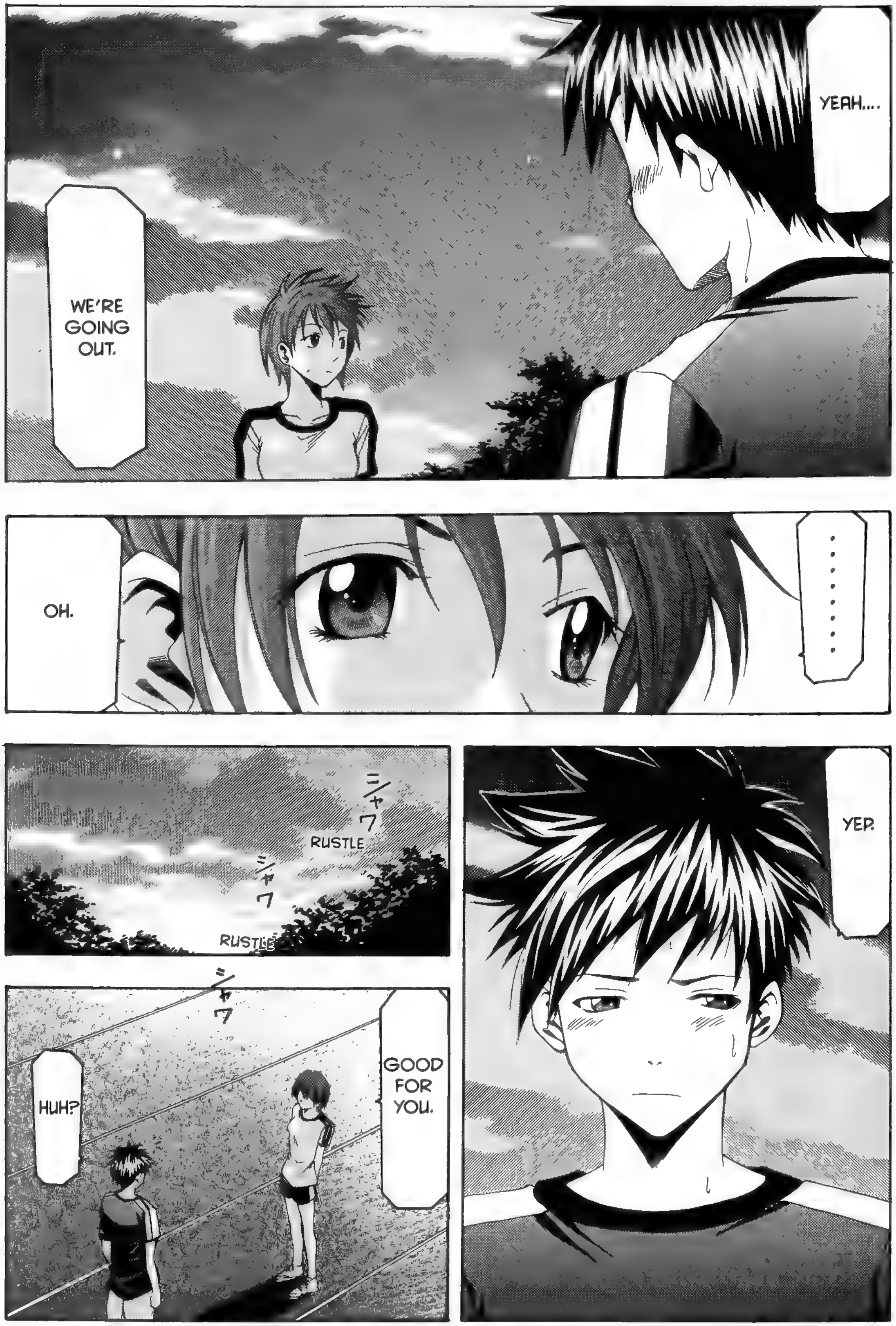

THEN WHY DIDN'T YOU STOP HIM?
HUH?
I MEAN, IT'S TOTALLY FUCKED UP!
ALL THIS TIME HE'S BEEN SAYING HE'S IN LOVE WITH SUZUKA, AND THEN SUDDENLY HE JUST CHANGES HIS MIND.
SO WHAT?
PEOPLE CHANGE THEIR MINDS ALL THE TIME.
I MEAN, YOU FELL IN LOVE WITH YAMATO JUST BECAUSE HE WAS FAST.
DON'T CHANGE THE SUBJECT!
DON'T YOU THINK IT'S WRONG?
IT IS! IT'S TOTALLY WRONG.
SAKURAI'S BEEN IN LOVE WITH YAMATO FOR A LONG TIME.
HUH?

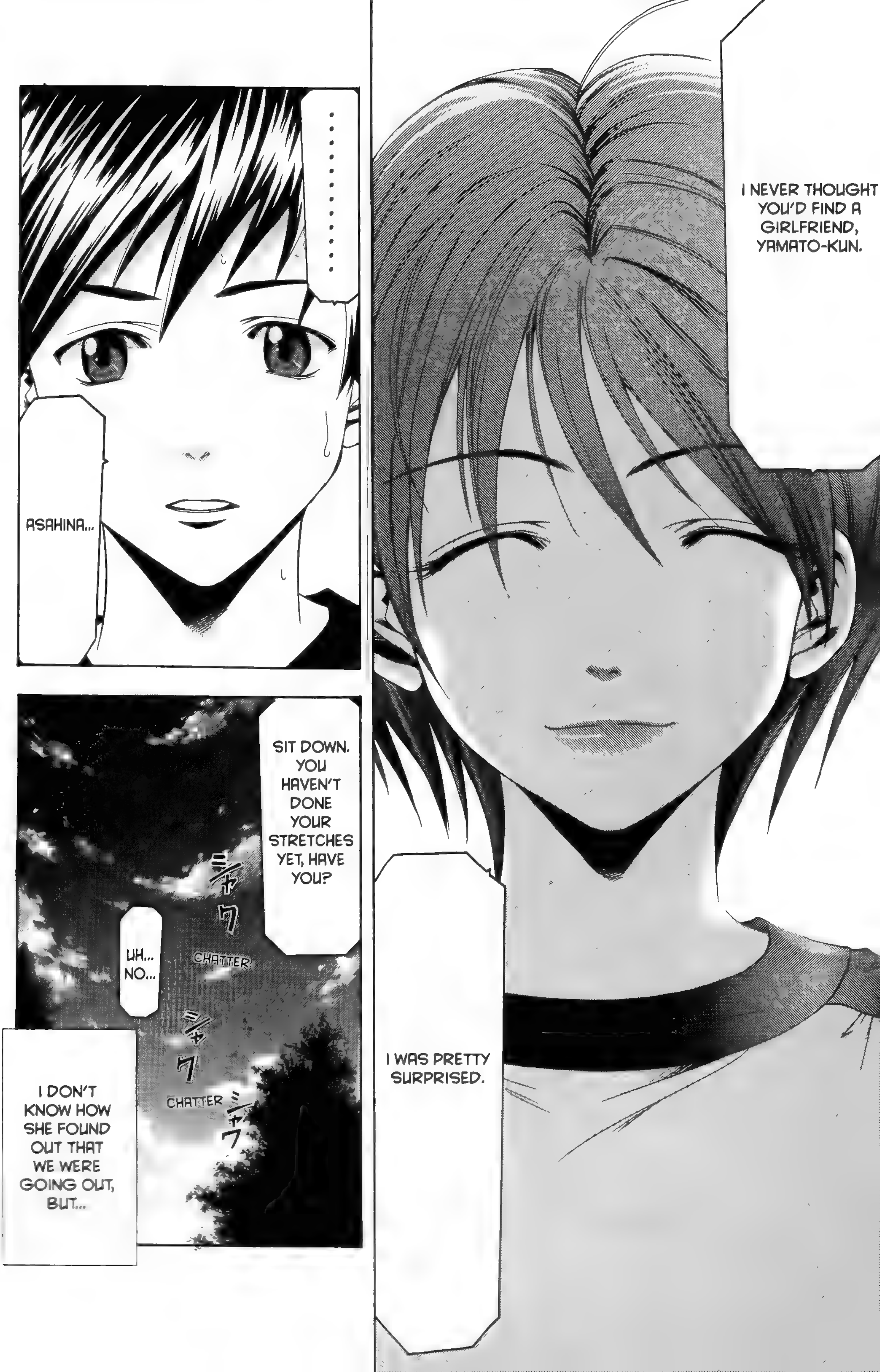

I'D SAY THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH YOU...
...TRYING TO BREAK THEM UP.
I—
I'M NOT—
THERE'S NO RIGHT OR WRONG IN LOVE.
SO MAYBE YOU SHOULD JUST SHUT UP, AND MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS.
ガタ
ッ
CLINK
HEY, WAIT!
GOD, I LOVE THE TRACK TEAM.
I'M NOT EVEN A MEMBER, AND YET THEY FEED ME!
I'M SERIOUS, SENPAI. THERE'S NOT ENOUGH FOR ME.
THAT'S WEIRD.
GRUMBLE
......

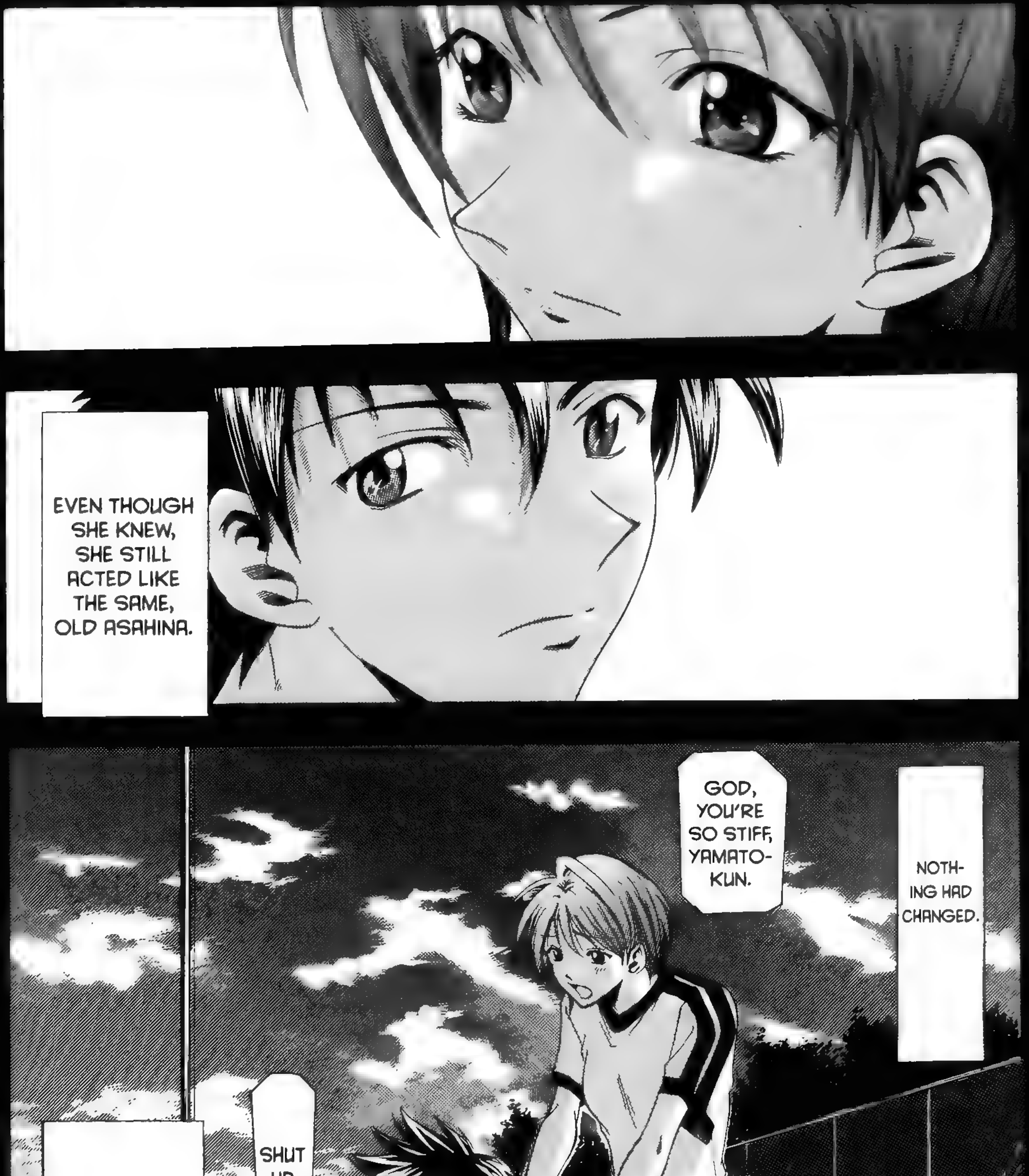

PHEW! I FINALLY FINISHED.
WHY AM I THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS TO DO EXTRA TRAINING?
THE CAPTAIN'S ALWAYS PICKING ON ME.
I'LL JUST STRETCH A LITTLE, AND HEAD BACK.
HEY!
AH... ASAHINA...


YOUR FORM IS ALL OFF AGAIN.
YOU'LL NEVER BREAK A RECORD WITH FORM LIKE THAT!
UH... YEAH.
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU THAT?
GET YOUR SHIT TOGETHER.
OKAY, I HEARD YOU THE FIRST TIME.
FWIP
....
HEY!
NOW WHAT?


ARE YOU REALLY GOING OUT WITH...
...HONOKA-CHAN?
HUH?
UH... UM..
WELL...

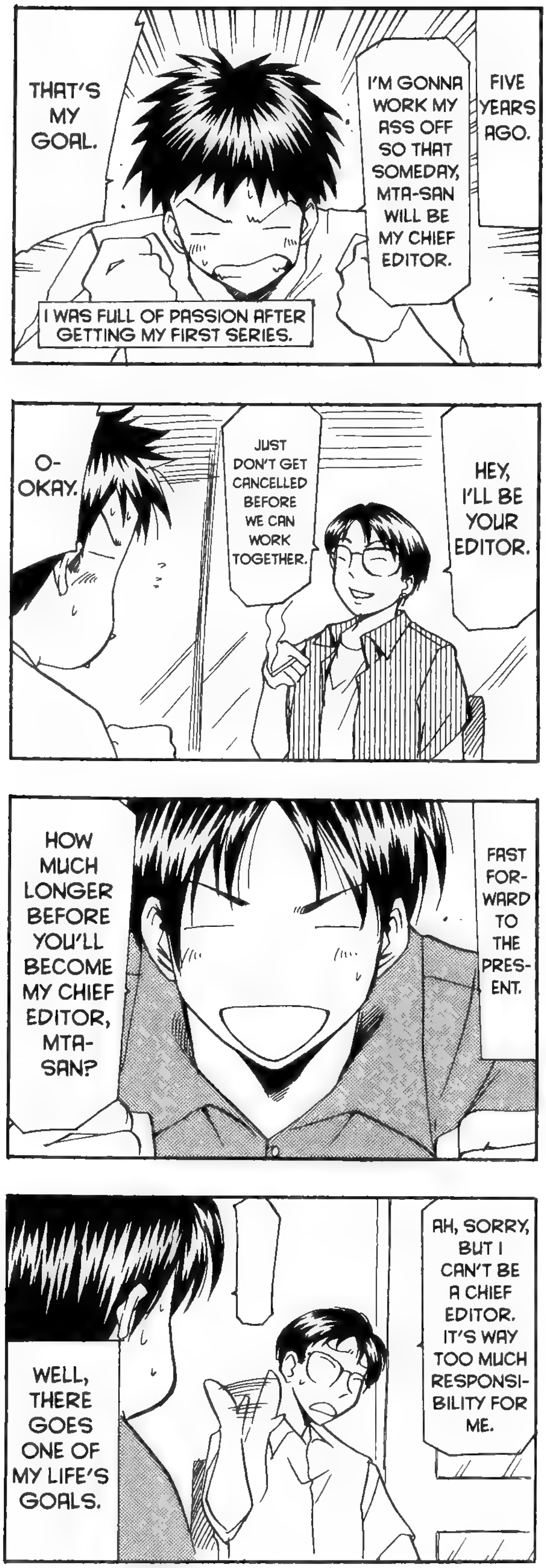

YEAH....
WE'RE GOING OUT.
......
OH.
YEP.
シャワ
RUSTLE
シャワ
RUSTLE
シャワ
GOOD FOR YOU.
HUH?

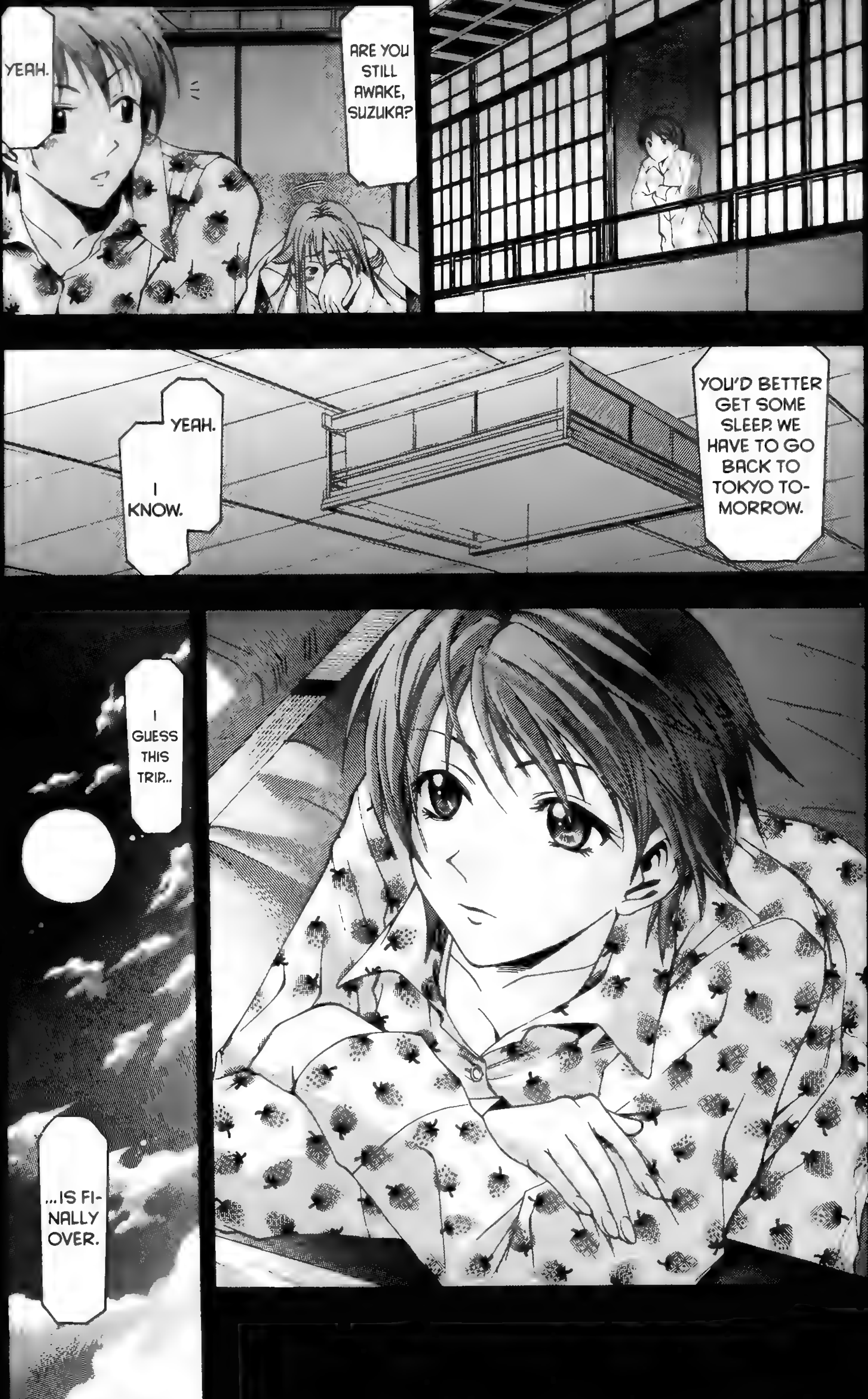

I NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D FIND A GIRLFRIEND, YAMATO-KUN.
I WAS PRETTY SURPRISED.
......
ASAHINA...
SIT DOWN. YOU HAVEN'T DONE YOUR STRETCHES YET, HAVE YOU?
シャク
CHATTER
UH... NO...
シャク
CHATTER
シャク
I DON'T KNOW HOW SHE FOUND OUT THAT WE WERE GOING OUT, BUT...


EVEN THOUGH SHE KNEW, SHE STILL ACTED LIKE THE SAME, OLD ASAHINA.
NOTHING HAD CHANGED.
GOD, YOU'RE SO STIFF, YAMATO-KUN.
SHUT UP.
SHE WAS HER USUAL SELF.

SUZUKA FOUR-PANEL THEATER NUMBER TWENTY-TWO

GOALS

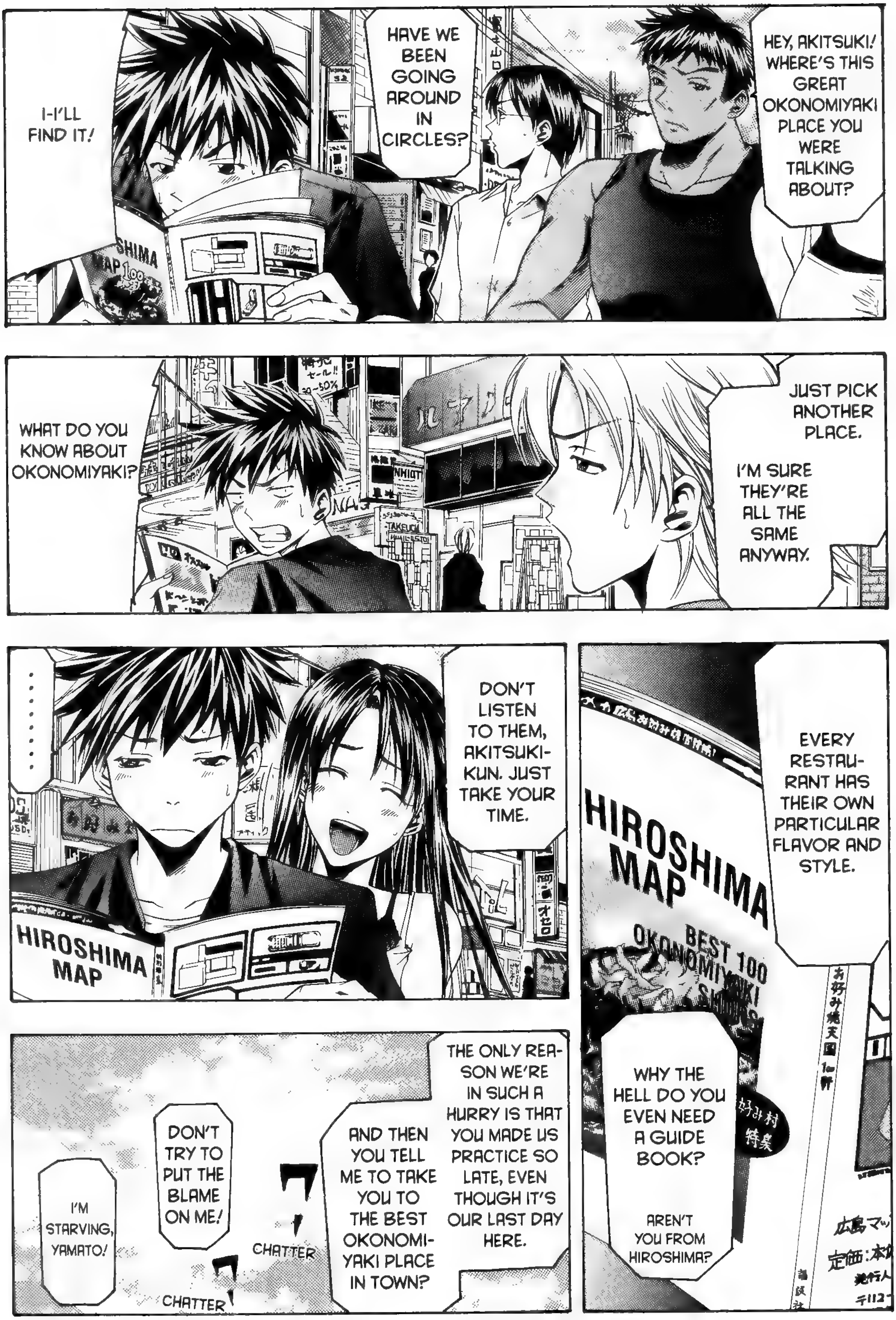

FIVE YEARS AGO.
I'M GONNA WORK MY ASS OFF SO THAT SOMEDAY, MTA-SAN WILL BE MY CHIEF EDITOR.
THAT'S MY GOAL.
I WAS FULL OF PASSION AFTER GETTING MY FIRST SERIES.
HEY, I'LL BE YOUR EDITOR.
JUST DON'T GET CANCELLED BEFORE WE CAN WORK TOGETHER.
O-OKAY.
FAST FORWARD TO THE PRESENT.
HOW MUCH LONGER BEFORE YOU'LL BECOME MY CHIEF EDITOR, MTA-SAN?
AH, SORRY, BUT I CAN'T BE A CHIEF EDITOR. IT'S WAY TOO MUCH RESPONSIBILITY FOR ME.
WELL, THERE GOES ONE OF MY LIFE'S GOALS.

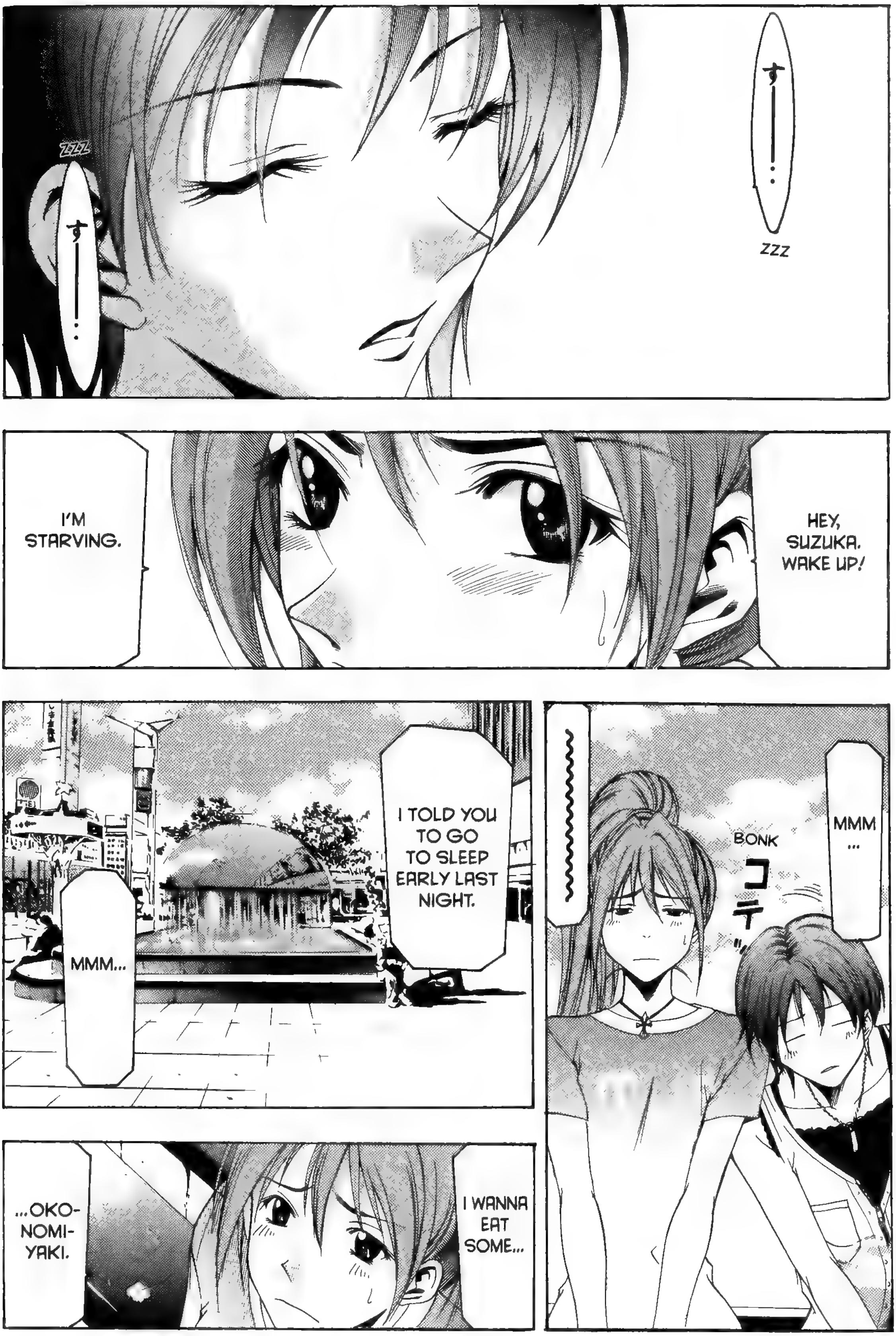

ARE YOU STILL AWAKE, SUZUKA?
YEAH.
YOU'D BETTER GET SOME SLEEP. WE HAVE TO GO BACK TO TOKYO TOMORROW.
YEAH.
I KNOW.
I GUESS THIS TRIP...
...IS FINALLY OVER.

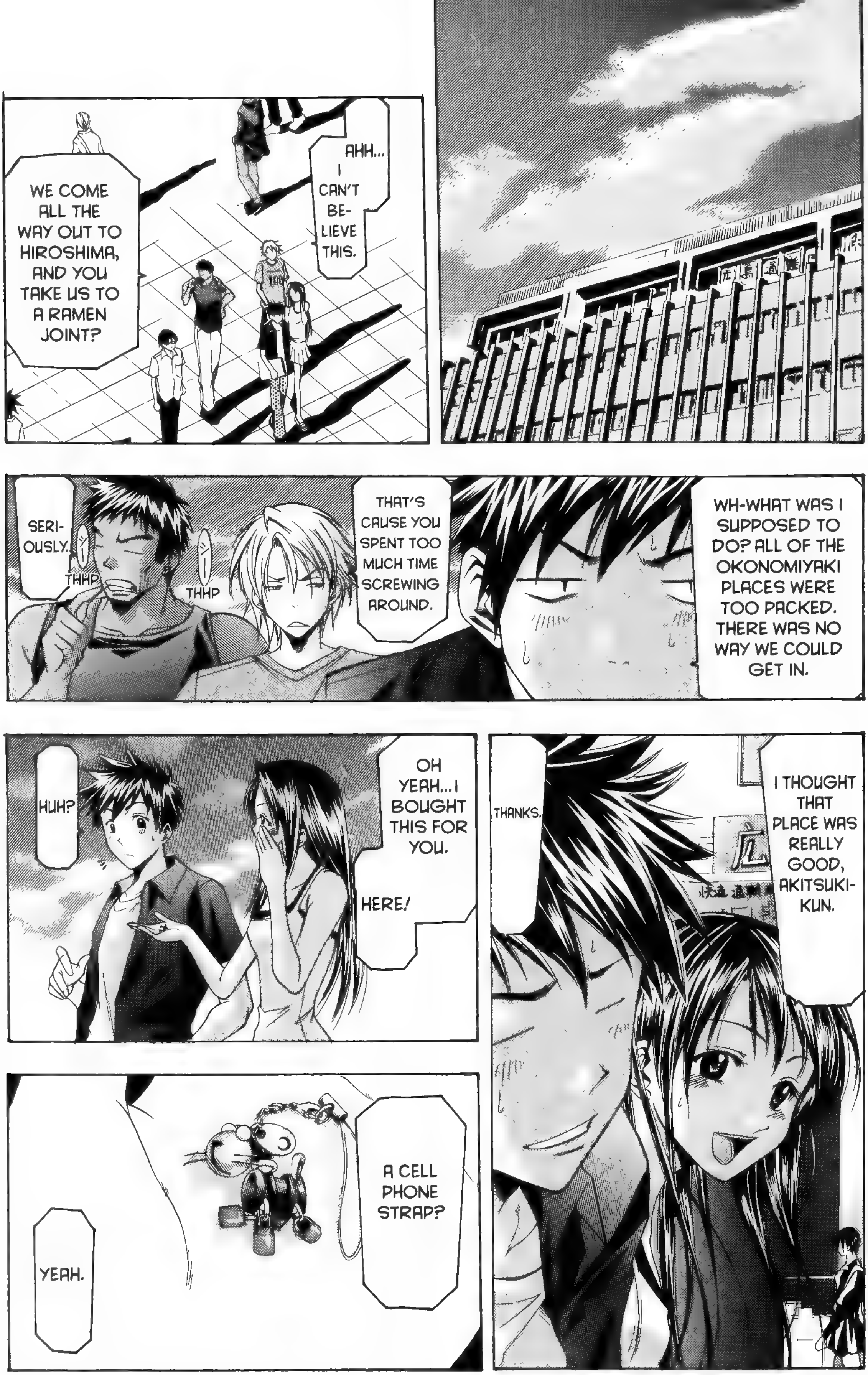
新天地
広島名物
元祖
お好み焼き
SHINTENCHI
WILD FANG
FANATIC 100

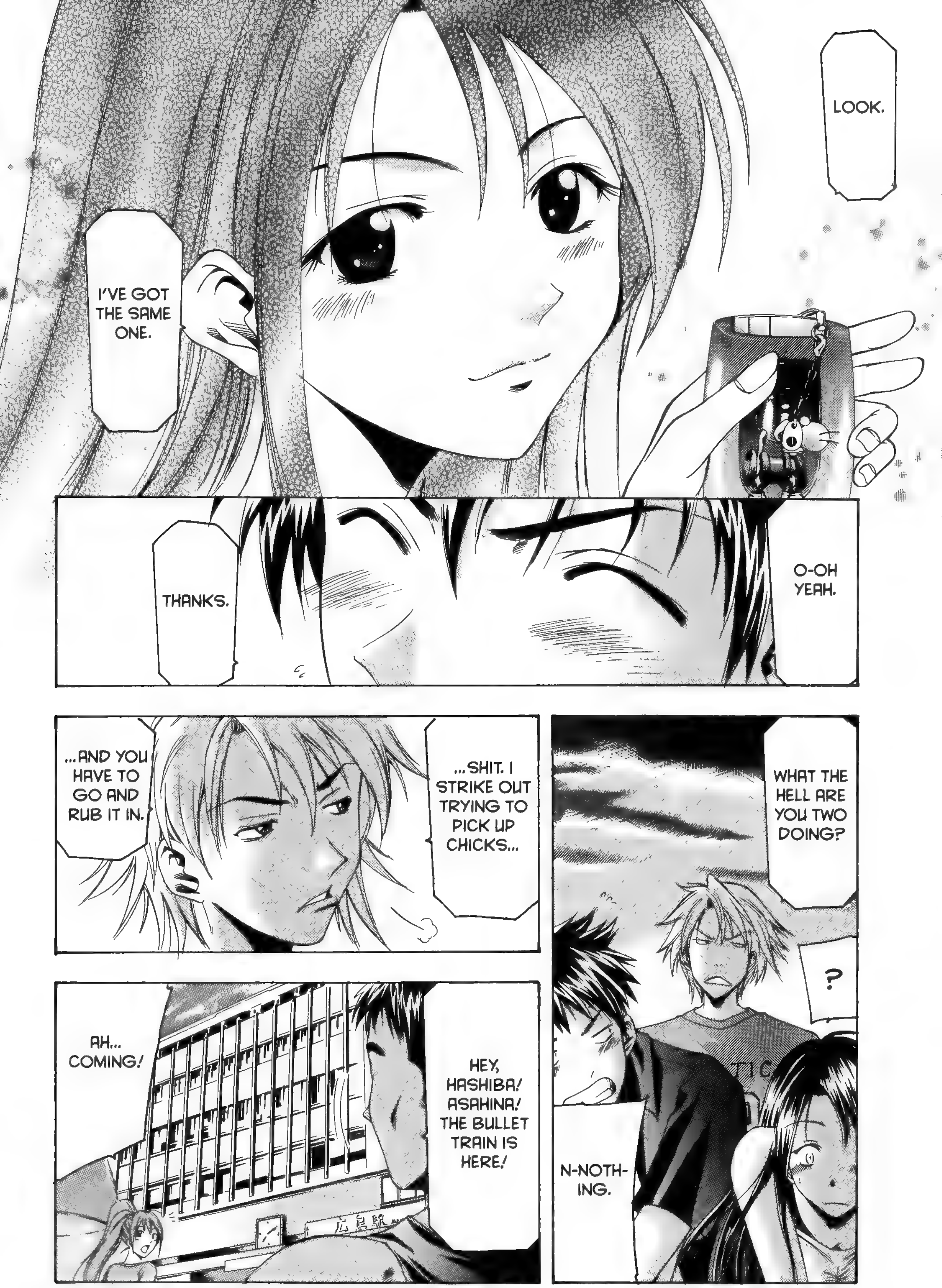
SUZUKA

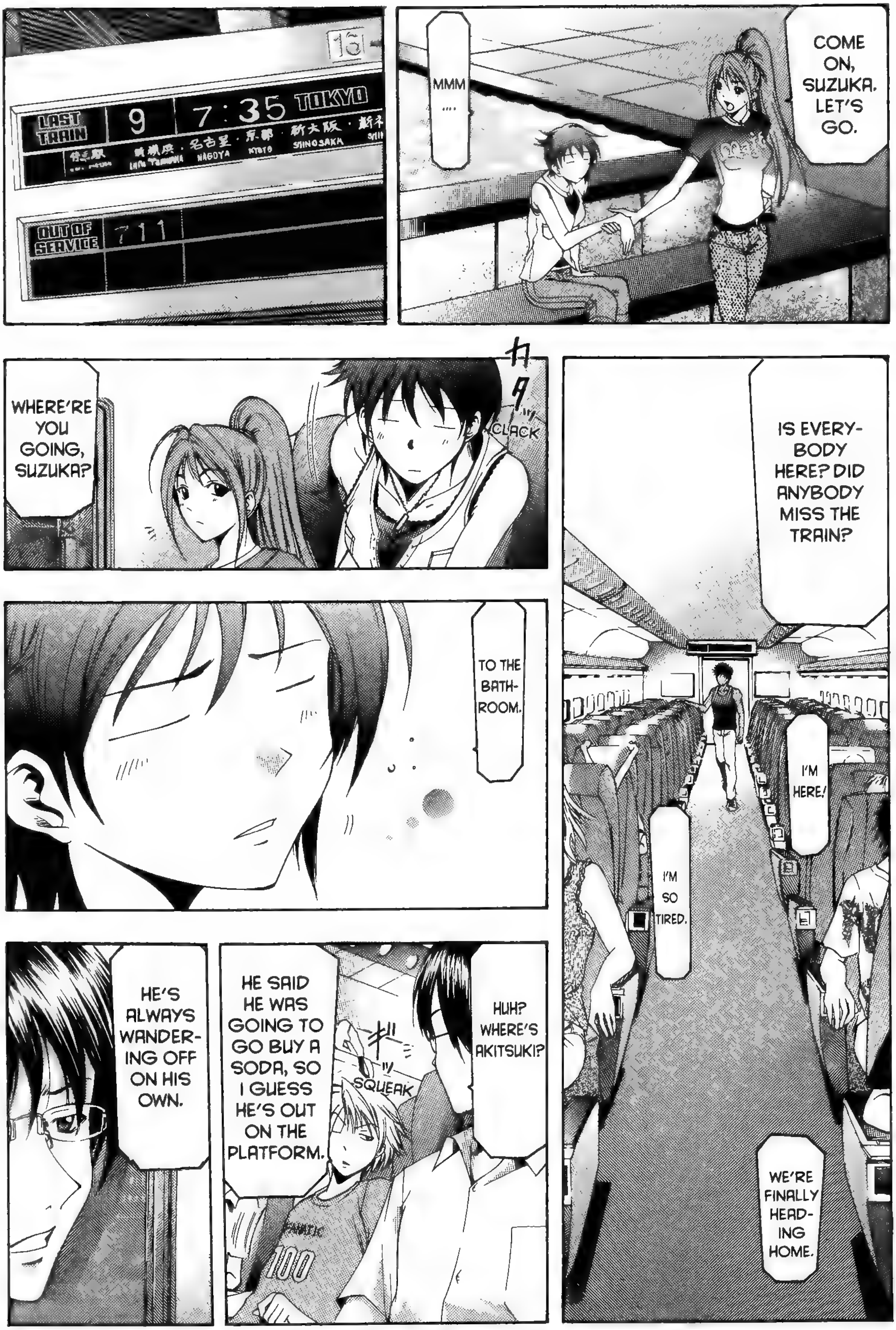
#38 LIGHTNING

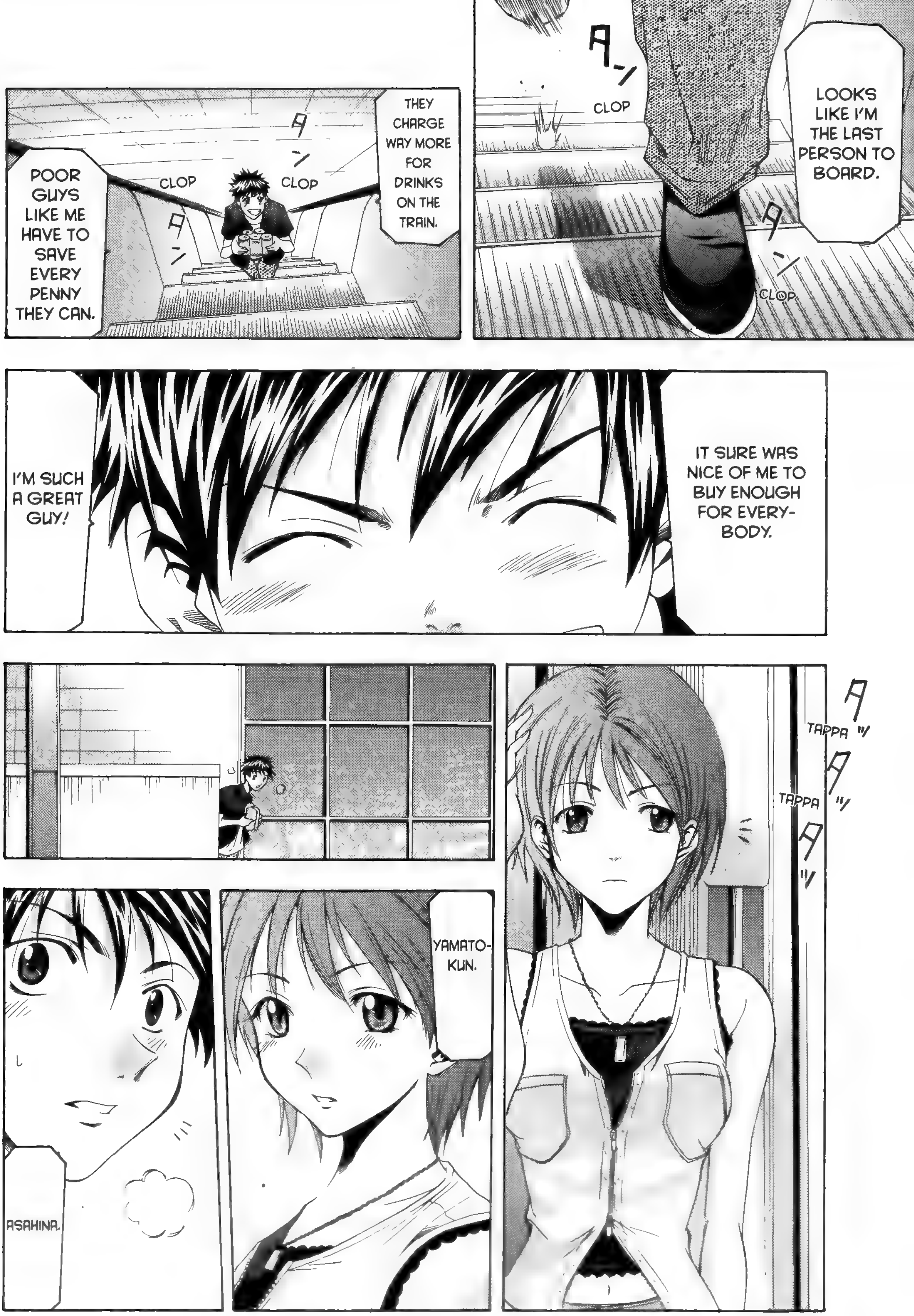

HEY, AKITSUKI! WHERE'S THIS GREAT OKONOMIYAKI PLACE YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT?
HAVE WE BEEN GOING AROUND IN CIRCLES?
I-I'LL FIND IT!
HIROSHIMA MAP 100
JUST PICK ANOTHER PLACE.
I'M SURE THEY'RE ALL THE SAME ANYWAY.
WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT OKONOMIYAKI?
EVERY RESTAURANT HAS THEIR OWN PARTICULAR FLAVOR AND STYLE.
HIROSHIMA MAP
BEST 100 OKONOMIYAKI SHOPS
DON'T LISTEN TO THEM, AKITSUKI-KUN. JUST TAKE YOUR TIME.
......
HIROSHIMA MAP
WHY THE HELL DO YOU EVEN NEED A GUIDE BOOK?
AREN'T YOU FROM HIROSHIMA?
THE ONLY REASON WE'RE IN SUCH A HURRY IS THAT YOU MADE US PRACTICE SO LATE, EVEN THOUGH IT'S OUR LAST DAY HERE.
AND THEN YOU TELL ME TO TAKE YOU TO THE BEST OKONOMIYAKI PLACE IN TOWN?
CHATTER
DON'T TRY TO PUT THE BLAME ON ME!
CHATTER
I'M STARVING, YAMATO!

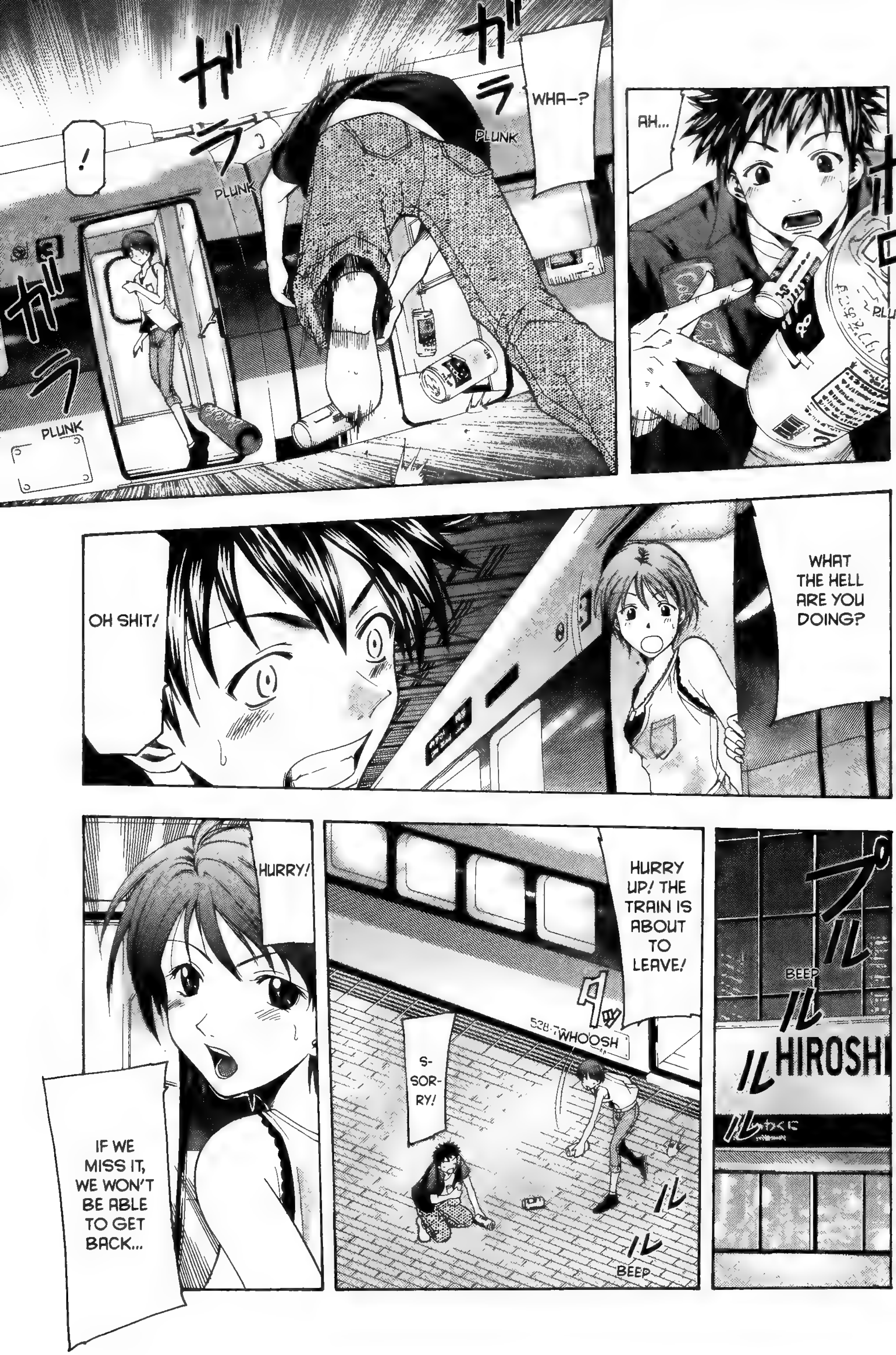

すーー!..
zzz
zzz
すーー!..
HEY, SUZUKA. WAKE UP!
I'M STARVING.
MMM...
BONK
コテ
～～～～～...
I TOLD YOU TO GO TO SLEEP EARLY LAST NIGHT.
MMM...
I WANNA EAT SOME...
...OKONOMIYAKI.

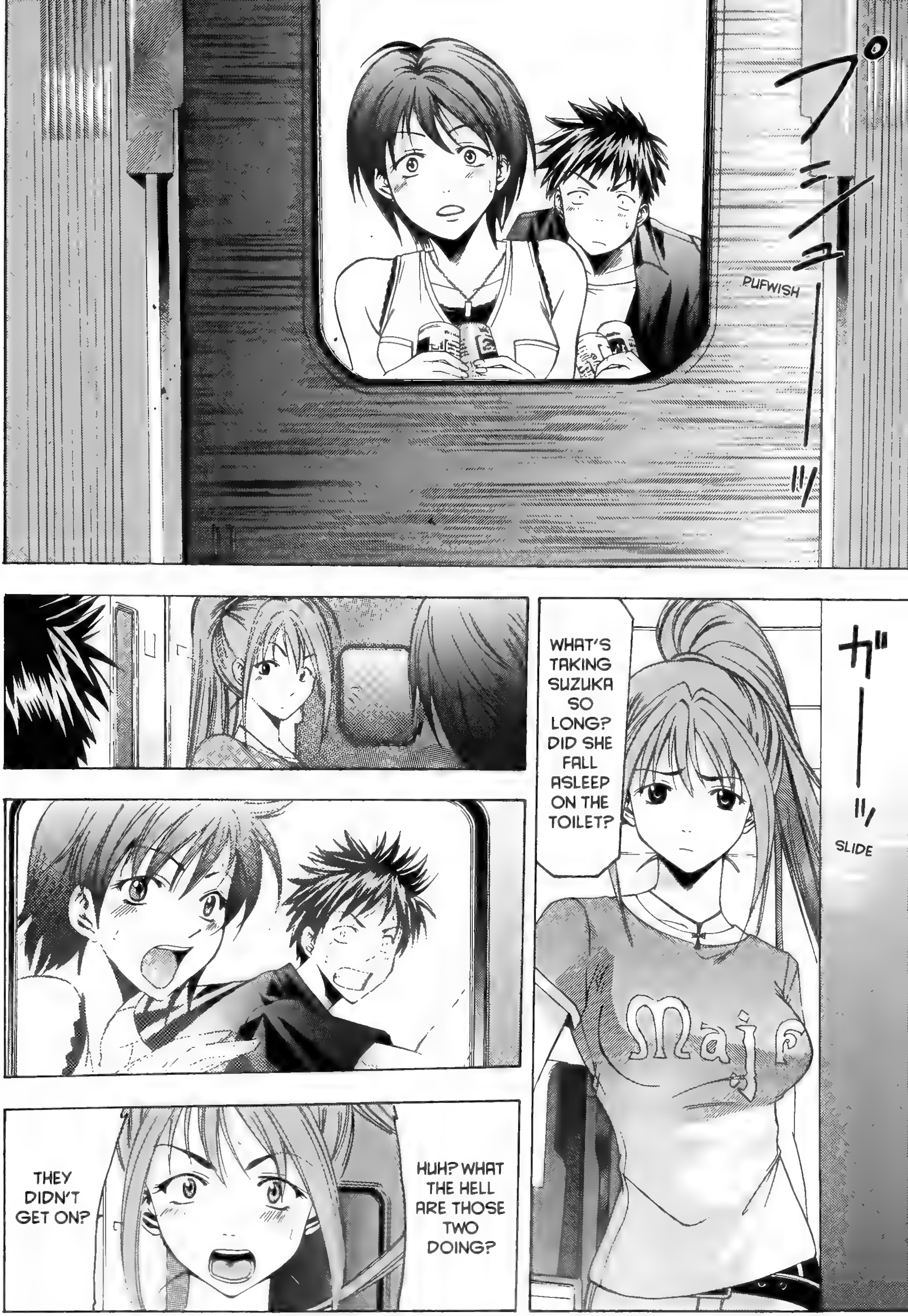

AHH... I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS.
WE COME ALL THE WAY OUT TO HIROSHIMA, AND YOU TAKE US TO A RAMEN JOINT?
WH-WHAT WAS I SUPPOSED TO DO? ALL OF THE OKONOMIYAKI PLACES WERE TOO PACKED. THERE WAS NO WAY WE COULD GET IN.
THAT'S CAUSE YOU SPENT TOO MUCH TIME SCREWING AROUND.
THHP
SERIOUSLY.
THHP
I THOUGHT THAT PLACE WAS REALLY GOOD, AKITSUKI-KUN.
THANKS.
OH YEAH...I BOUGHT THIS FOR YOU.
HERE!
HUH?
A CELL PHONE STRAP?
YEAH.

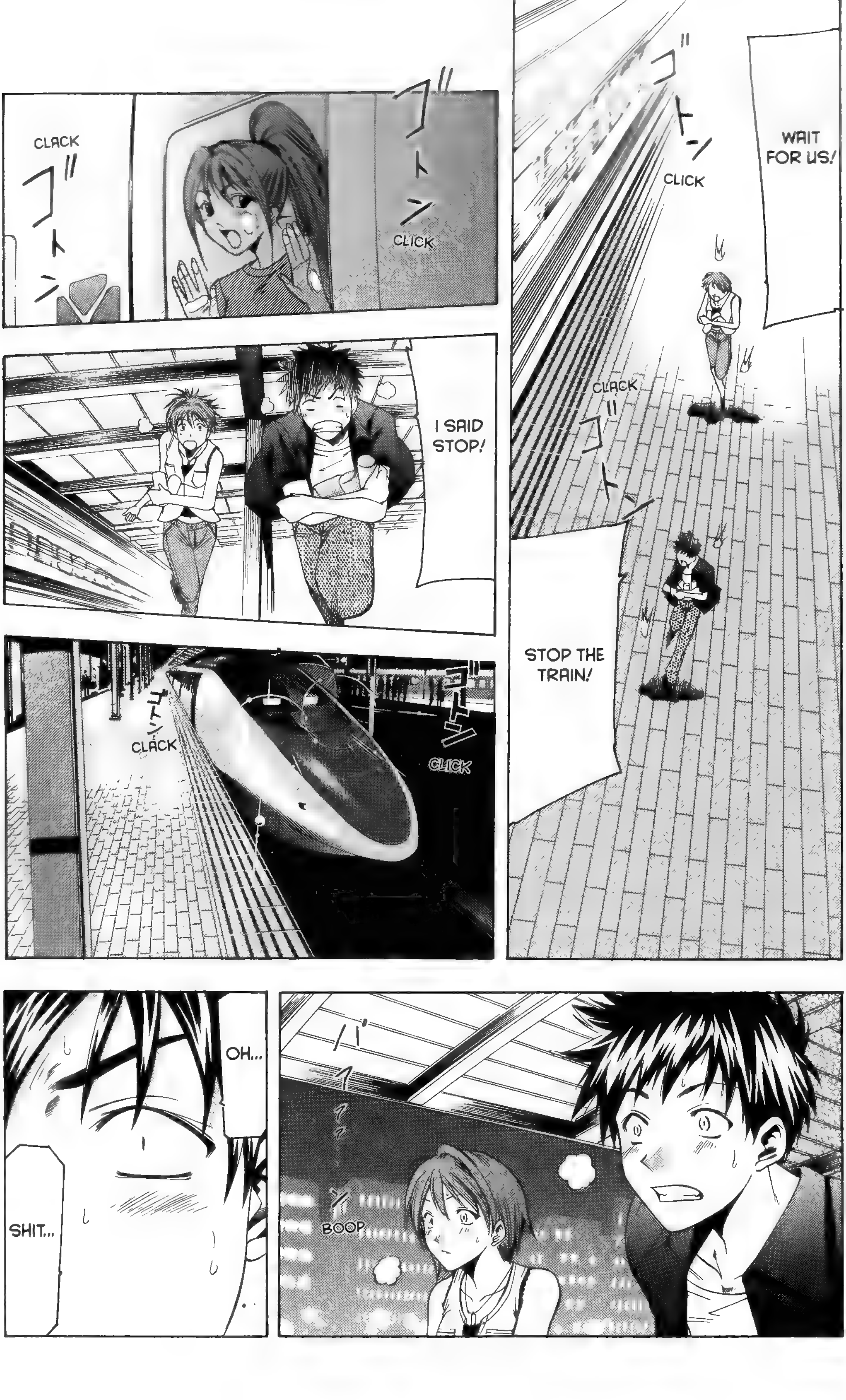

LOOK.
I'VE GOT THE SAME ONE.
O-OH YEAH.
THANKS.
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TWO DOING?
?
N-NOTHING.
...SHIT. I STRIKE OUT TRYING TO PICK UP CHICKS...
...AND YOU HAVE TO GO AND RUB IT IN.
HEY, HASHIBA! ASAHINA! THE BULLET TRAIN IS HERE!
AH... COMING!
広島駅

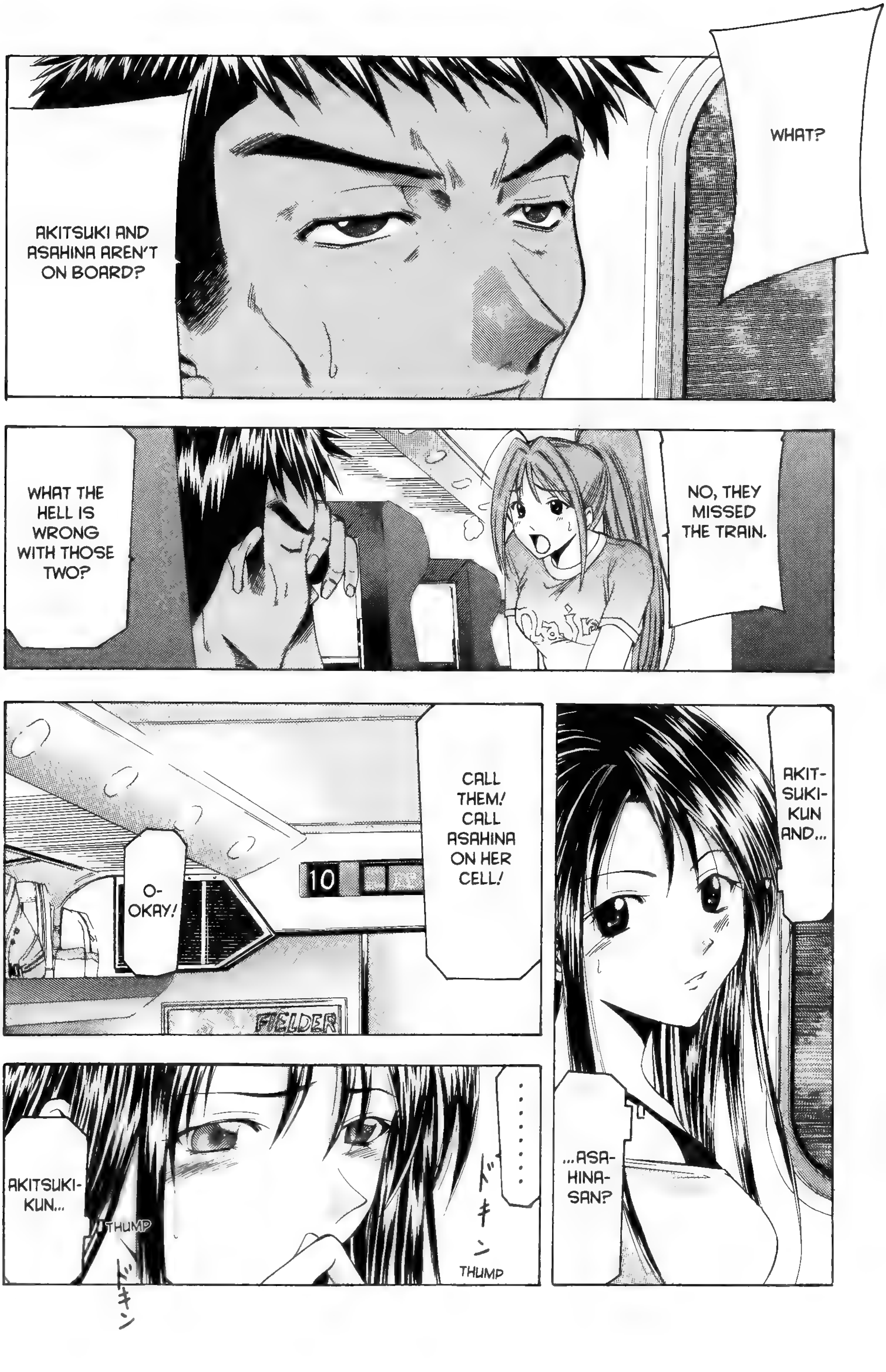

COME ON, SUZUKA. LET'S GO.
MMM....
LAST TRAIN 9 7:35 TOKYO
名古屋 NAGOYA · 京都 KYOTO · 新大阪 SHINOSAKA
OUT OF SERVICE 711
カタ CLACK
WHERE'RE YOU GOING, SUZUKA?
TO THE BATHROOM.
IS EVERYBODY HERE? DID ANYBODY MISS THE TRAIN?
I'M HERE!
I'M SO TIRED.
WE'RE FINALLY HEADING HOME.
HUH? WHERE'S AKITSUKI!?
ギ SQUEAK
HE SAID HE WAS GOING TO GO BUY A SODA, SO I GUESS HE'S OUT ON THE PLATFORM.
HE'S ALWAYS WANDERING OFF ON HIS OWN.

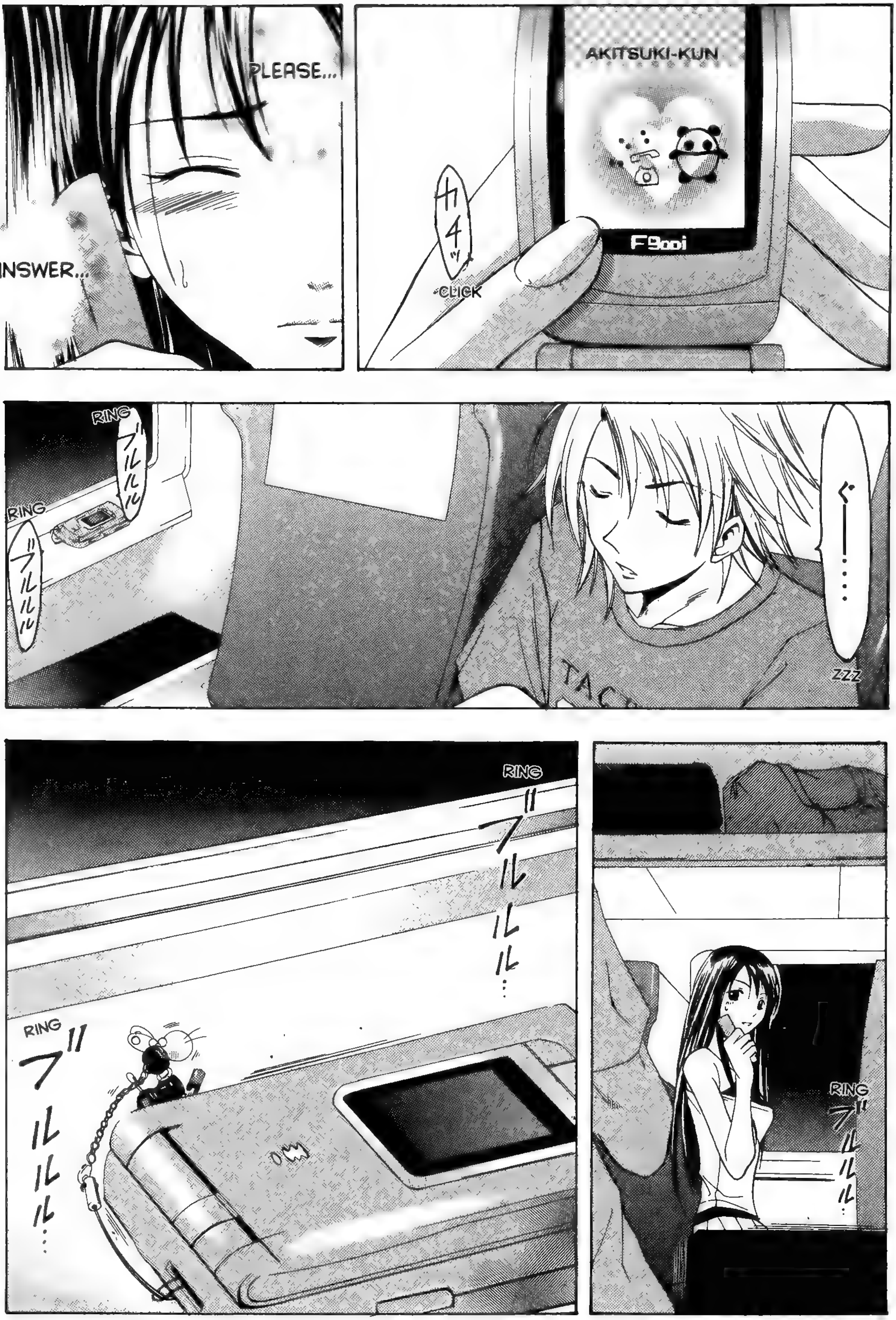

CLOP
LOOKS LIKE I'M THE LAST PERSON TO BOARD.
CLOP
THEY CHARGE WAY MORE FOR DRINKS ON THE TRAIN.
CLOP
CLOP
POOR GUYS LIKE ME HAVE TO SAVE EVERY PENNY THEY CAN.
IT SURE WAS NICE OF ME TO BUY ENOUGH FOR EVERYBODY.
I'M SUCH A GREAT GUY!
TAPPA
TAPPA
YAMATO-KUN.
ASAHINA.

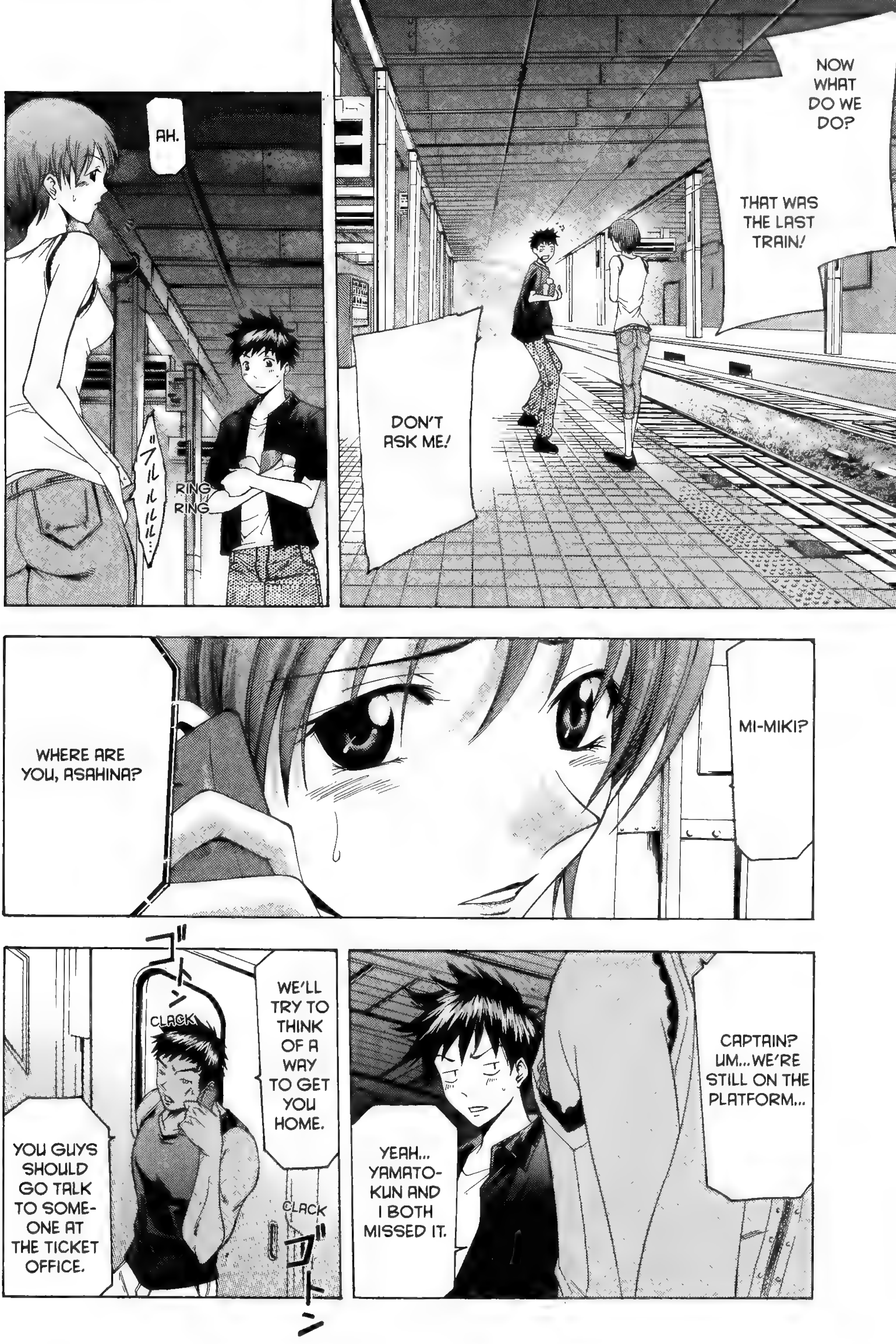

!
ガラ
PLUNK
ガラ
PLUNK
ガラ
PLUNK
WHA–?
AH...
ポロッ
PLUP
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?
OH SHIT!
プルル
BEEP
HIROSHI
わくに
HURRY UP! THE TRAIN IS ABOUT TO LEAVE!
タッ
WHOOSH
538-7
S-SORRY!
ルル
BEEP
HURRY!
IF WE MISS IT, WE WON'T BE ABLE TO GET BACK...

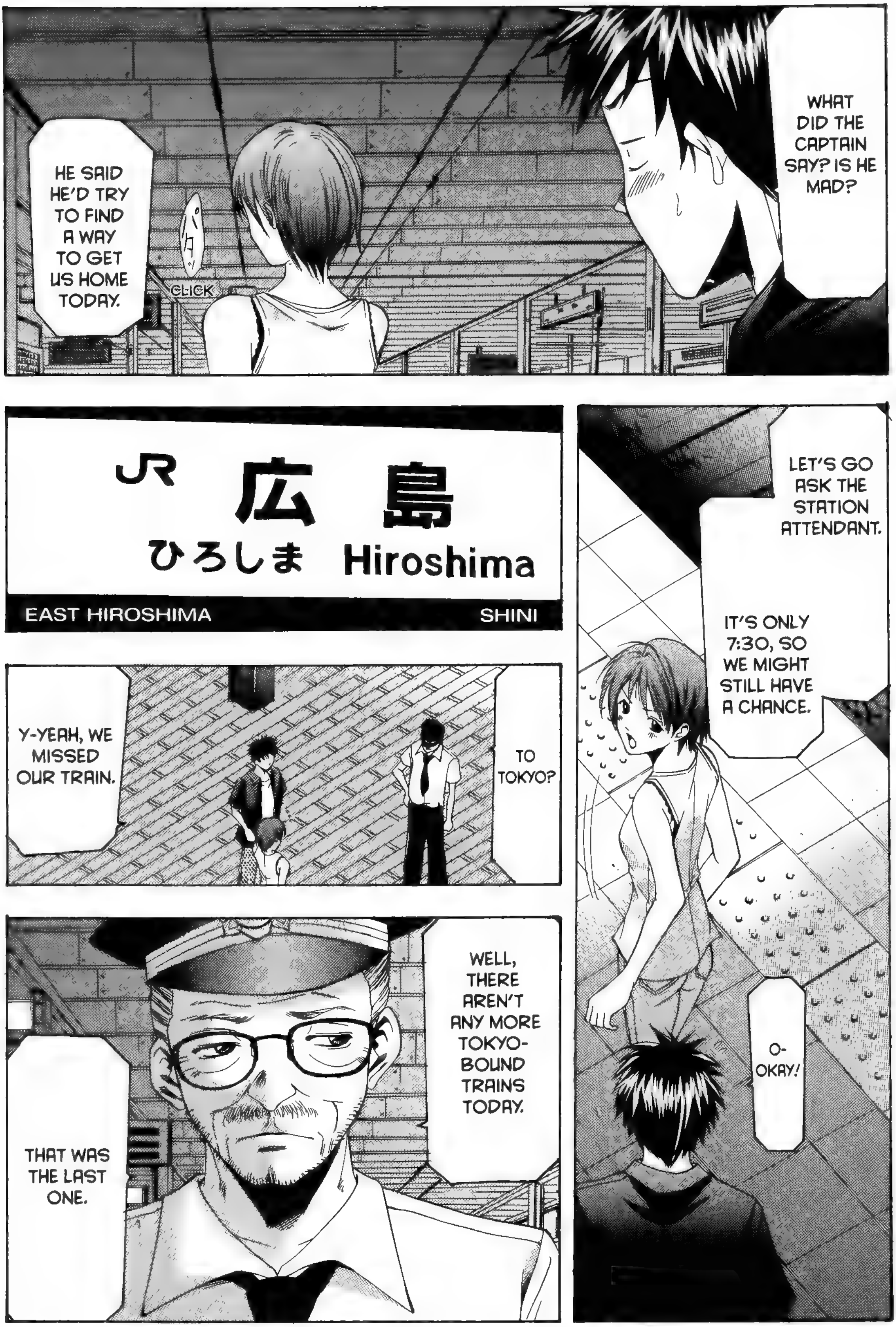

プシューッ
PUFWISH
ガーッ
SLIDE
WHAT'S TAKING SUZUKA SO LONG? DID SHE FALL ASLEEP ON THE TOILET?
HUH? WHAT THE HELL ARE THOSE TWO DOING?
THEY DIDN'T GET ON?

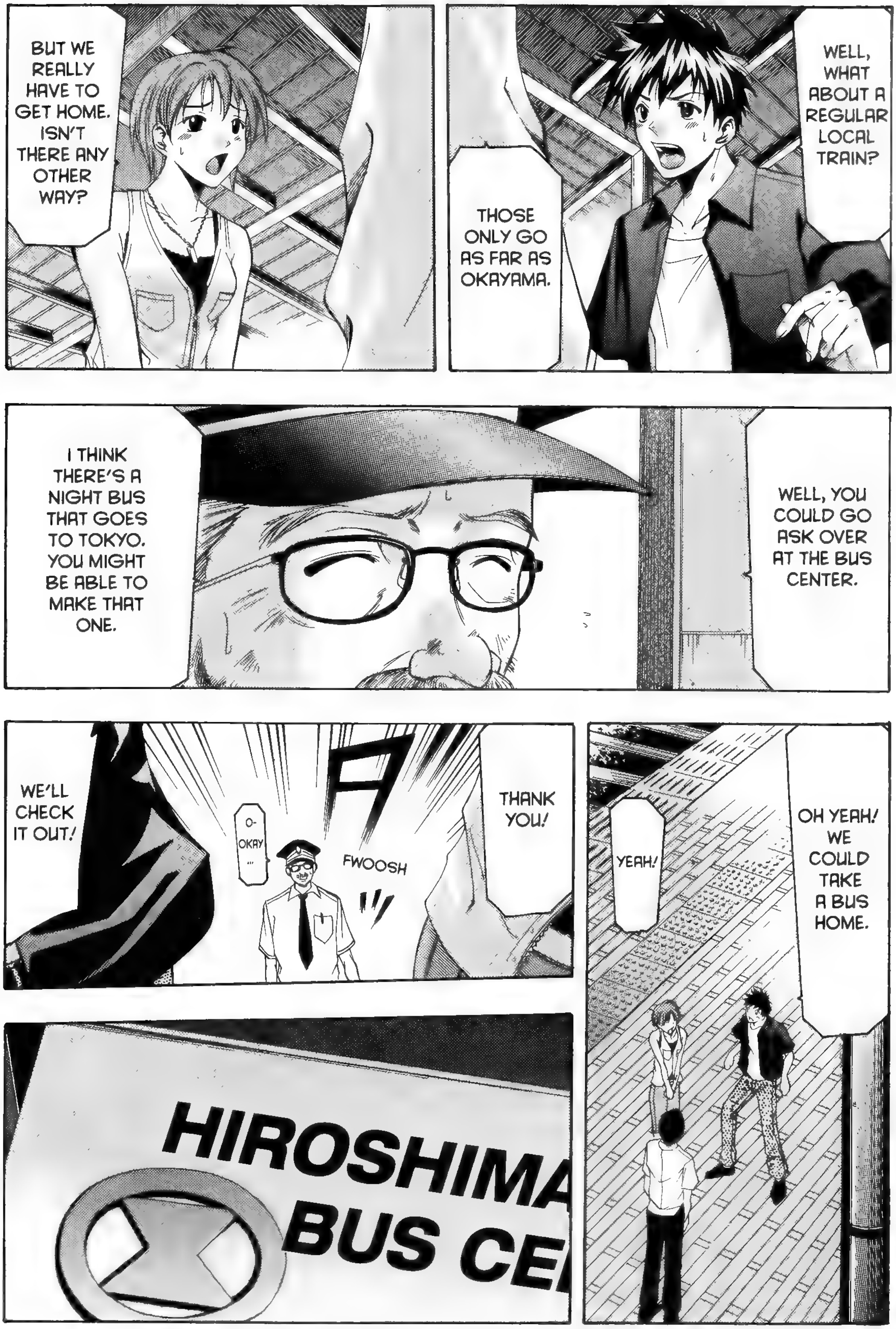

WAIT FOR US!
ゴトン
CLICK
CLACK
ゴトン
STOP THE TRAIN!
ゴトン
CLICK
CLACK
ゴトン
I SAID STOP!
ゴトン
CLICK
ゴトン
CLACK
パァァァ…ン
BOOP
OH...
SHIT...

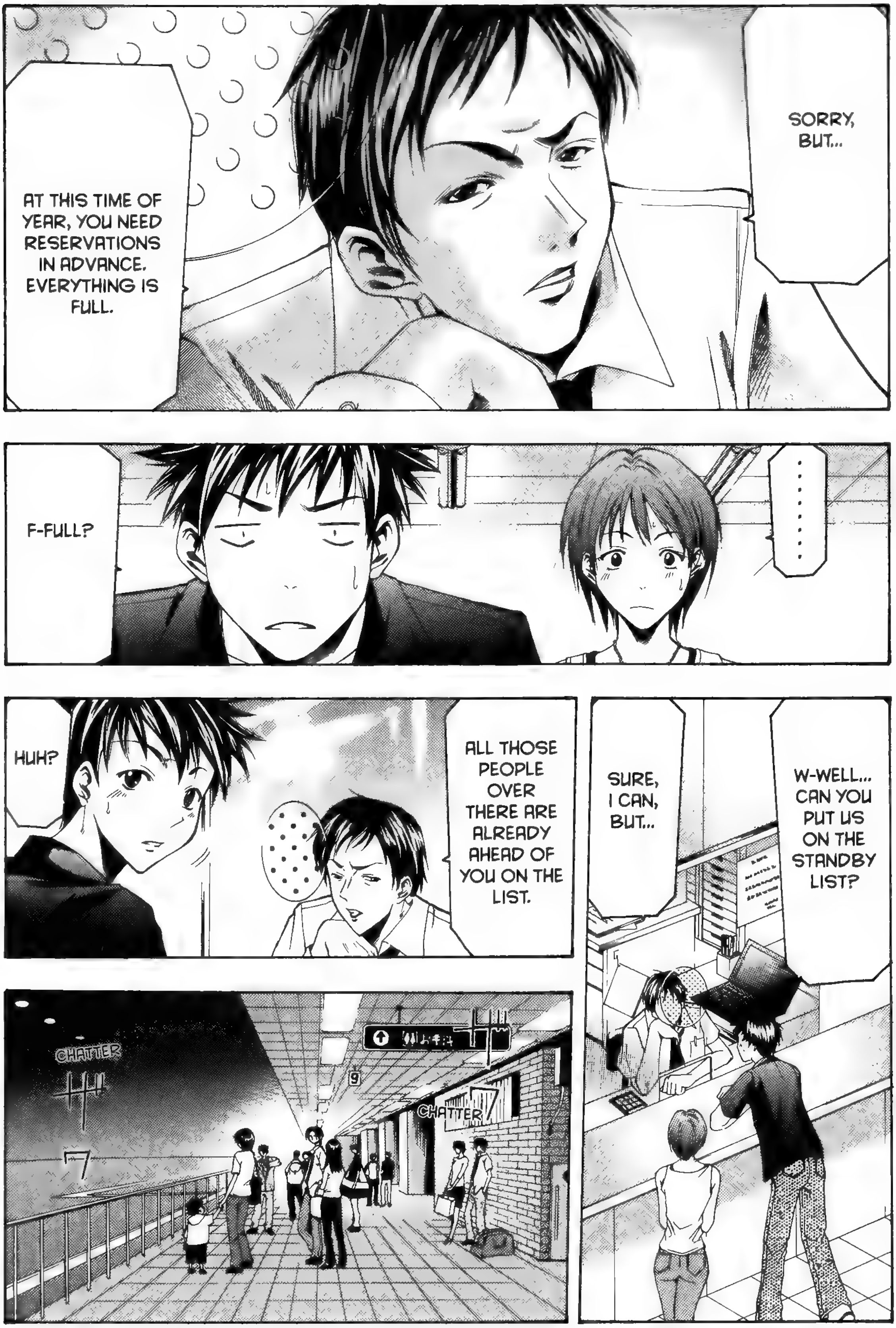

WHAT?
AKITSUKI AND ASAHINA AREN'T ON BOARD?
NO, THEY MISSED THE TRAIN.
WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH THOSE TWO?
AKITSUKI-KUN AND...
...ASAHINA-SAN?
CALL THEM! CALL ASAHINA ON HER CELL!
O-OKAY!
10
FIELDER
....
ドキン
THUMP
AKITSUKI-KUN...
THUMP
ドキン

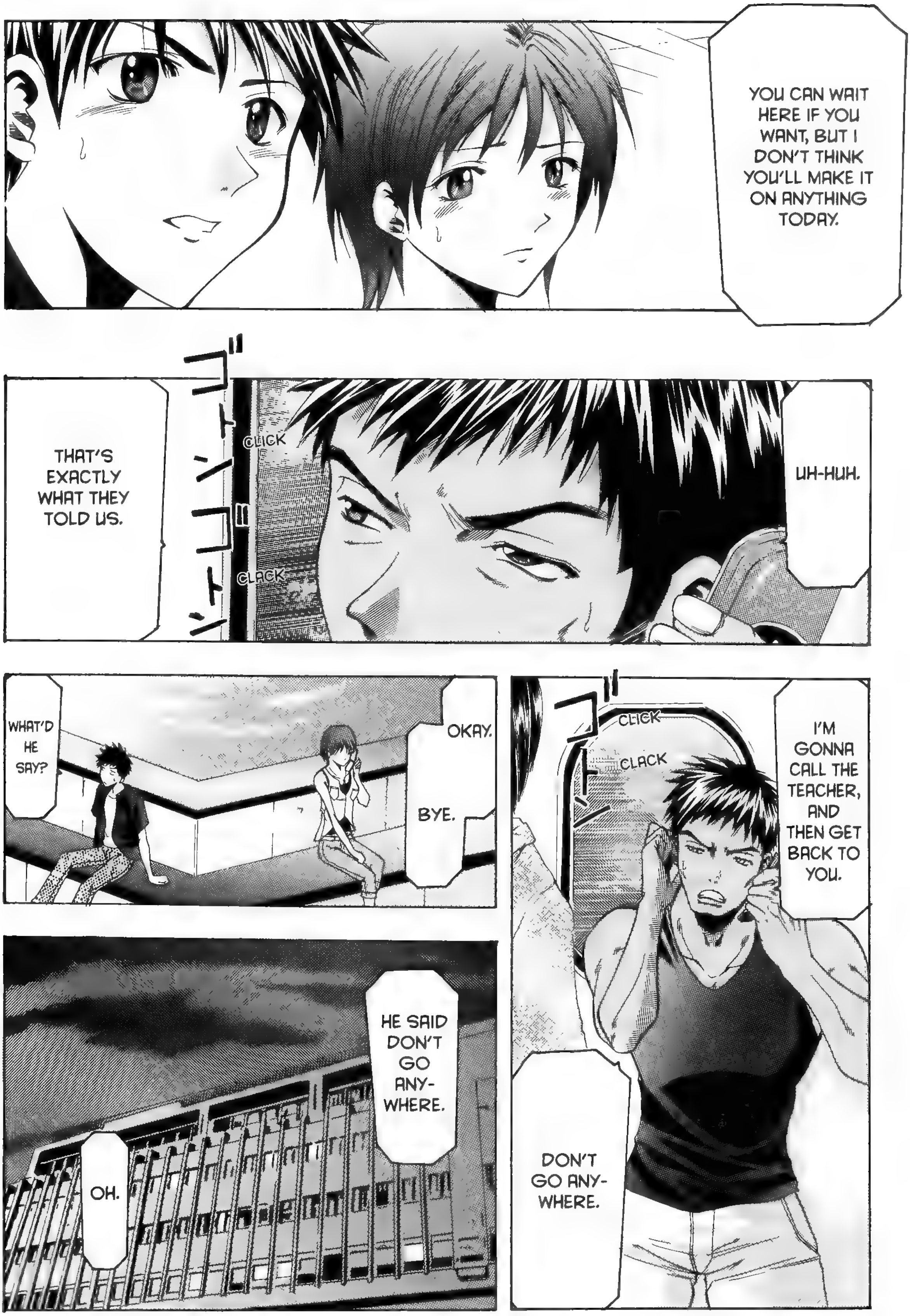

AKITSUKI-KUN
F900i
カチッ
CLICK
PLEASE...
ANSWER...
ぐー……
ZZZ
RING
ブルルル
RING
ブルルル
RING
ブルルル…
RING
ブルルル…
RING
ブルルル…

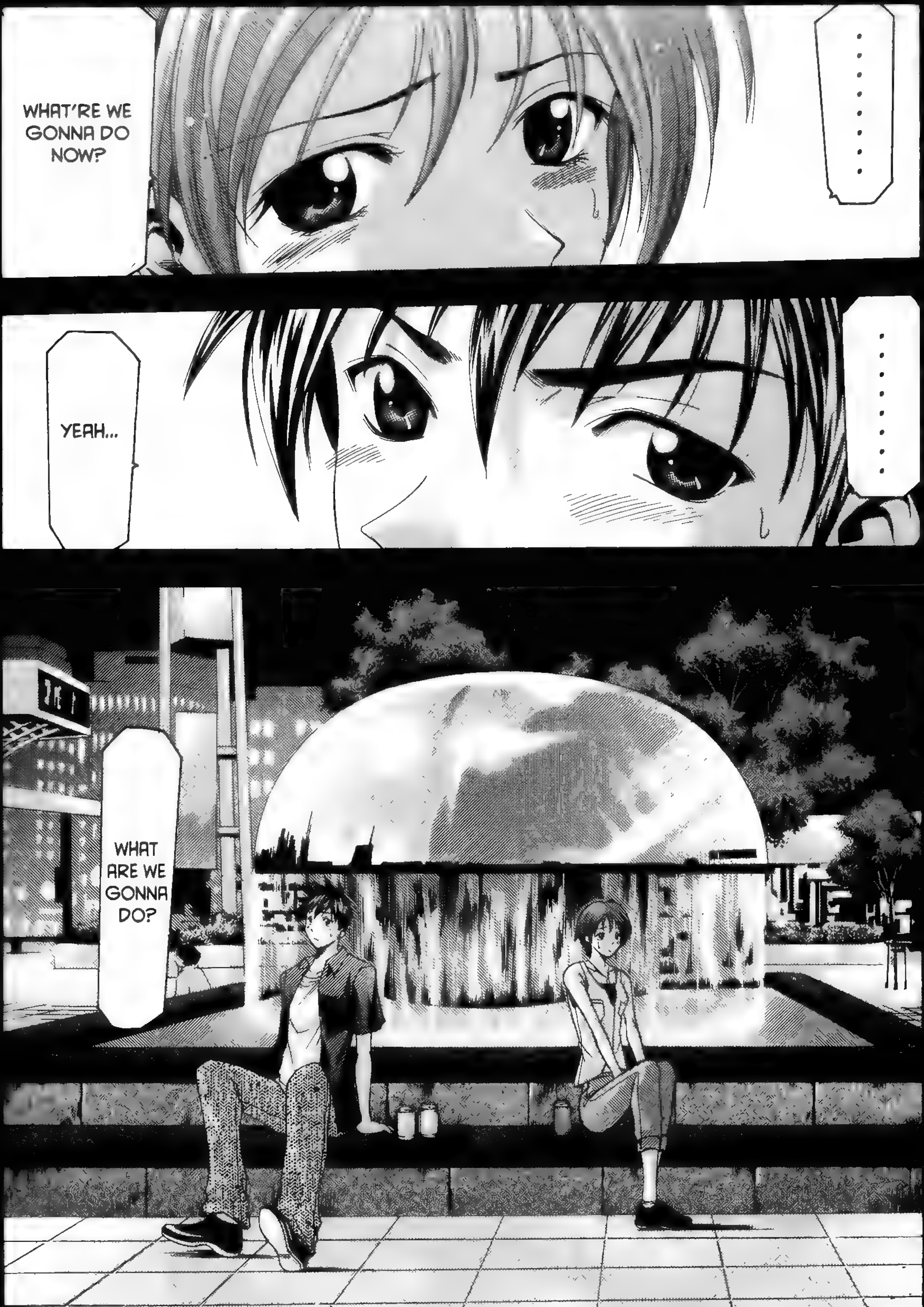

NOW WHAT DO WE DO?
THAT WAS THE LAST TRAIN!
DON'T ASK ME!
AH.
ブルルルル…
RING RING
MI-MIKI?
WHERE ARE YOU, ASAHINA?
CAPTAIN? UM...WE'RE STILL ON THE PLATFORM...
YEAH... YAMATO-KUN AND I BOTH MISSED IT.
ゴトン
CLACK
WE'LL TRY TO THINK OF A WAY TO GET YOU HOME.
YOU GUYS SHOULD GO TALK TO SOME-ONE AT THE TICKET OFFICE.
CLACK
ゴトン


WHAT DID THE CAPTAIN SAY? IS HE MAD?
HE SAID HE'D TRY TO FIND A WAY TO GET US HOME TODAY.
パタッ
CLICK
LET'S GO ASK THE STATION ATTENDANT.
IT'S ONLY 7:30, SO WE MIGHT STILL HAVE A CHANCE.
O- OKAY!
JR 広島 ひろしま Hiroshima
EAST HIROSHIMA SHINI
TO TOKYO?
Y-YEAH, WE MISSED OUR TRAIN.
WELL, THERE AREN'T ANY MORE TOKYO-BOUND TRAINS TODAY.
THAT WAS THE LAST ONE.


WELL, WHAT ABOUT A REGULAR LOCAL TRAIN?
THOSE ONLY GO AS FAR AS OKAYAMA.
BUT WE REALLY HAVE TO GET HOME. ISN'T THERE ANY OTHER WAY?
WELL, YOU COULD GO ASK OVER AT THE BUS CENTER.
I THINK THERE'S A NIGHT BUS THAT GOES TO TOKYO. YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO MAKE THAT ONE.
OH YEAH! WE COULD TAKE A BUS HOME.
YEAH!
THANK YOU!
FWOOSH
O-OKAY...
WE'LL CHECK IT OUT!
HIROSHIMA
BUS CE

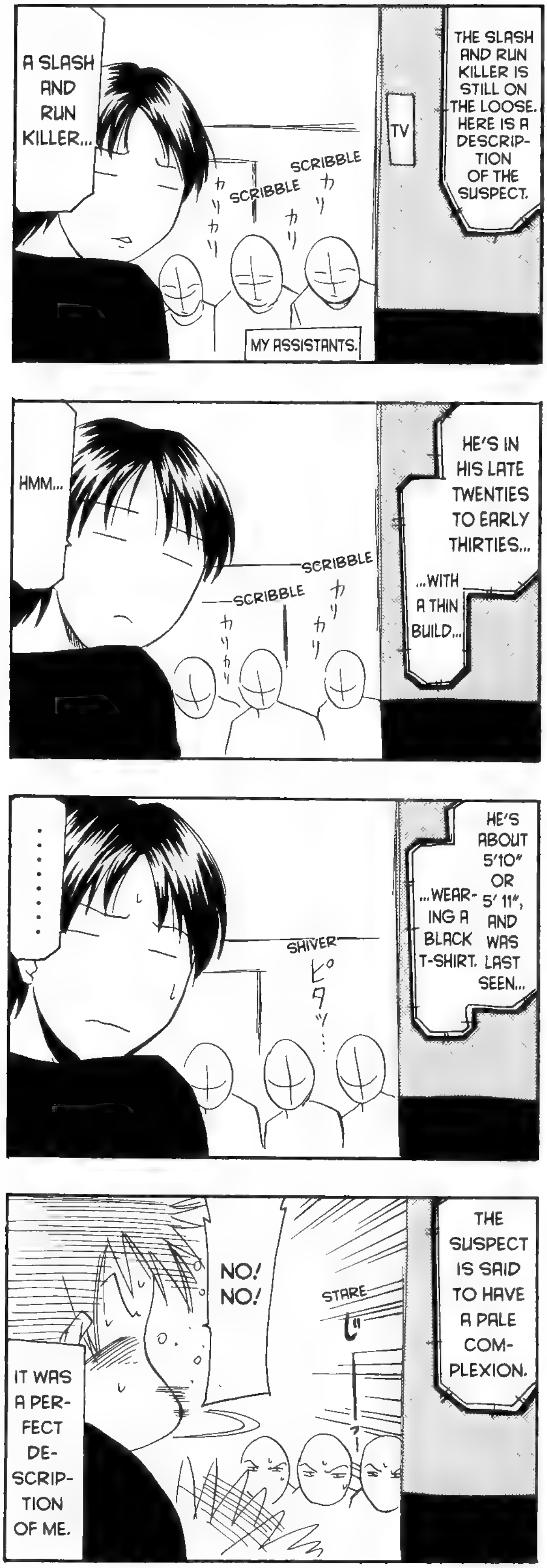

SORRY, BUT...
AT THIS TIME OF YEAR, YOU NEED RESERVATIONS IN ADVANCE. EVERYTHING IS FULL.
......
F-FULL?
W-WELL... CAN YOU PUT US ON THE STANDBY LIST?
SURE, I CAN, BUT...
ALL THOSE PEOPLE OVER THERE ARE ALREADY AHEAD OF YOU ON THE LIST.
HUH?
お手洗
9
CHATTER
CHATTER


YOU CAN WAIT HERE IF YOU WANT, BUT I DON'T THINK YOU'LL MAKE IT ON ANYTHING TODAY.
UH-HUH.
ゴトンゴトン
CLICK
CLACK
THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT THEY TOLD US.
I'M GONNA CALL THE TEACHER, AND THEN GET BACK TO YOU.
ゴトン
CLICK
CLACK
DON'T GO ANYWHERE.
OKAY.
BYE.
WHAT'D HE SAY?
HE SAID DON'T GO ANYWHERE.
OH.


……
WHAT'RE WE GONNA DO NOW?
……
YEAH…
WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO?

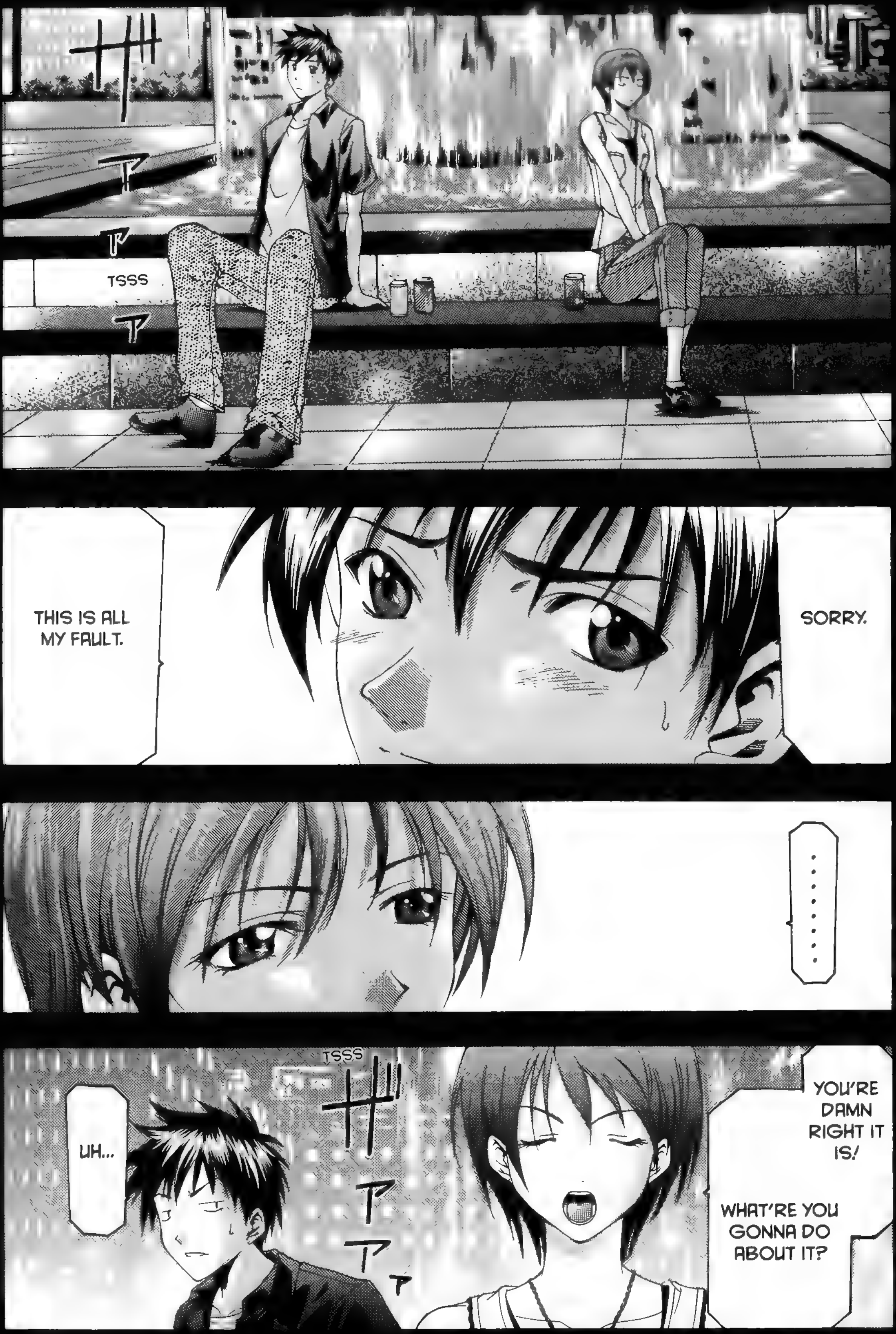
SUZUKA FOUR-PANEL THEATER NUMBER TWENTY-THREE

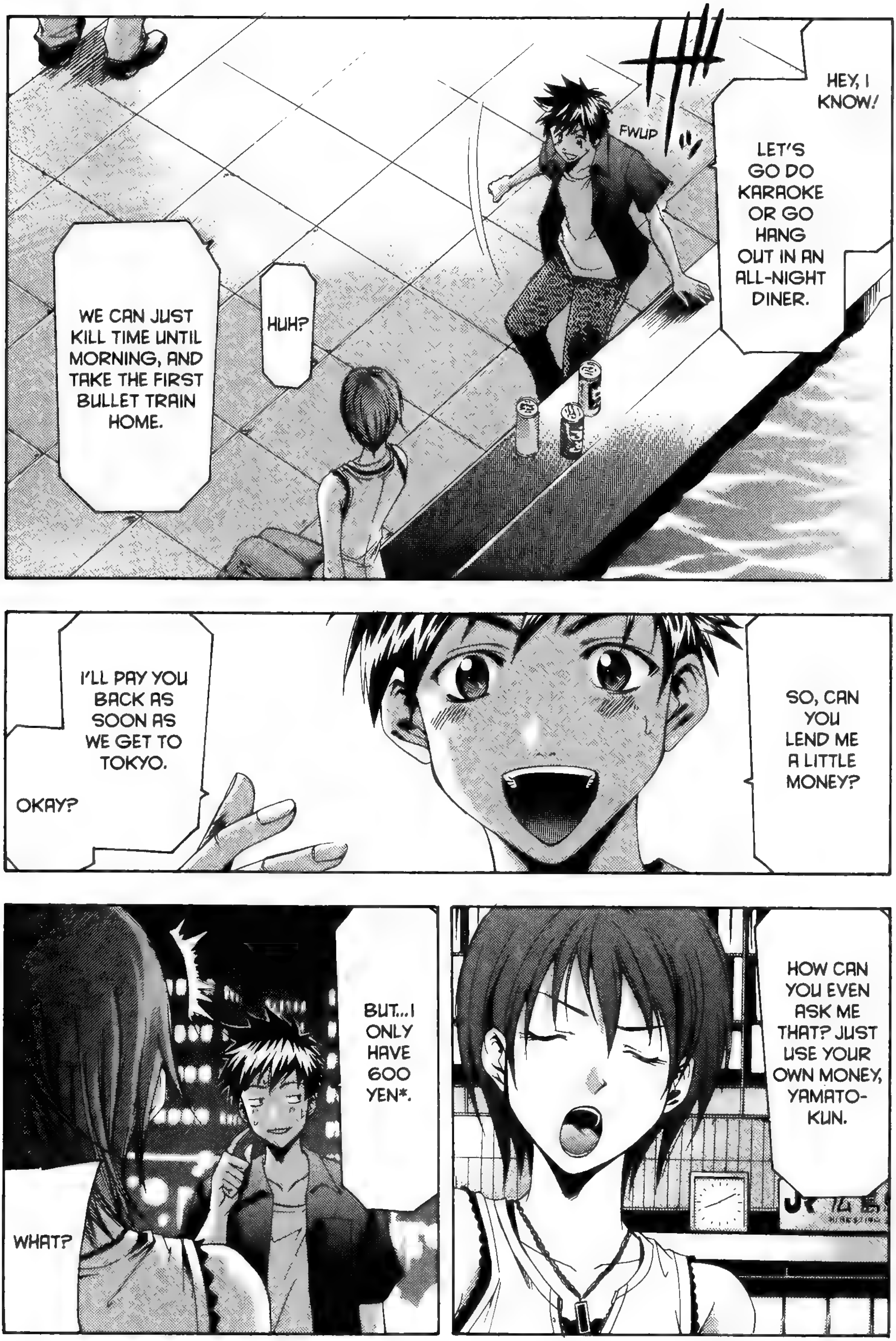
CRIMINAL TRAITS


THE SLASH AND RUN KILLER IS STILL ON THE LOOSE. HERE IS A DESCRIPTION OF THE SUSPECT.
TV
SCRIBBLE カリ
SCRIBBLE カリカリ
カリカリ
A SLASH AND RUN KILLER...
MY ASSISTANTS.
HE'S IN HIS LATE TWENTIES TO EARLY THIRTIES...
...WITH A THIN BUILD...
SCRIBBLE カリカリ
SCRIBBLE カリカリ
HMM...
HE'S ABOUT 5'10" OR 5' 11", AND WAS LAST SEEN...
...WEARING A BLACK T-SHIRT.
SHIVER ピタッ...
....
THE SUSPECT IS SAID TO HAVE A PALE COMPLEXION.
STARE じー
NO! NO!
IT WAS A PERFECT DESCRIPTION OF ME.

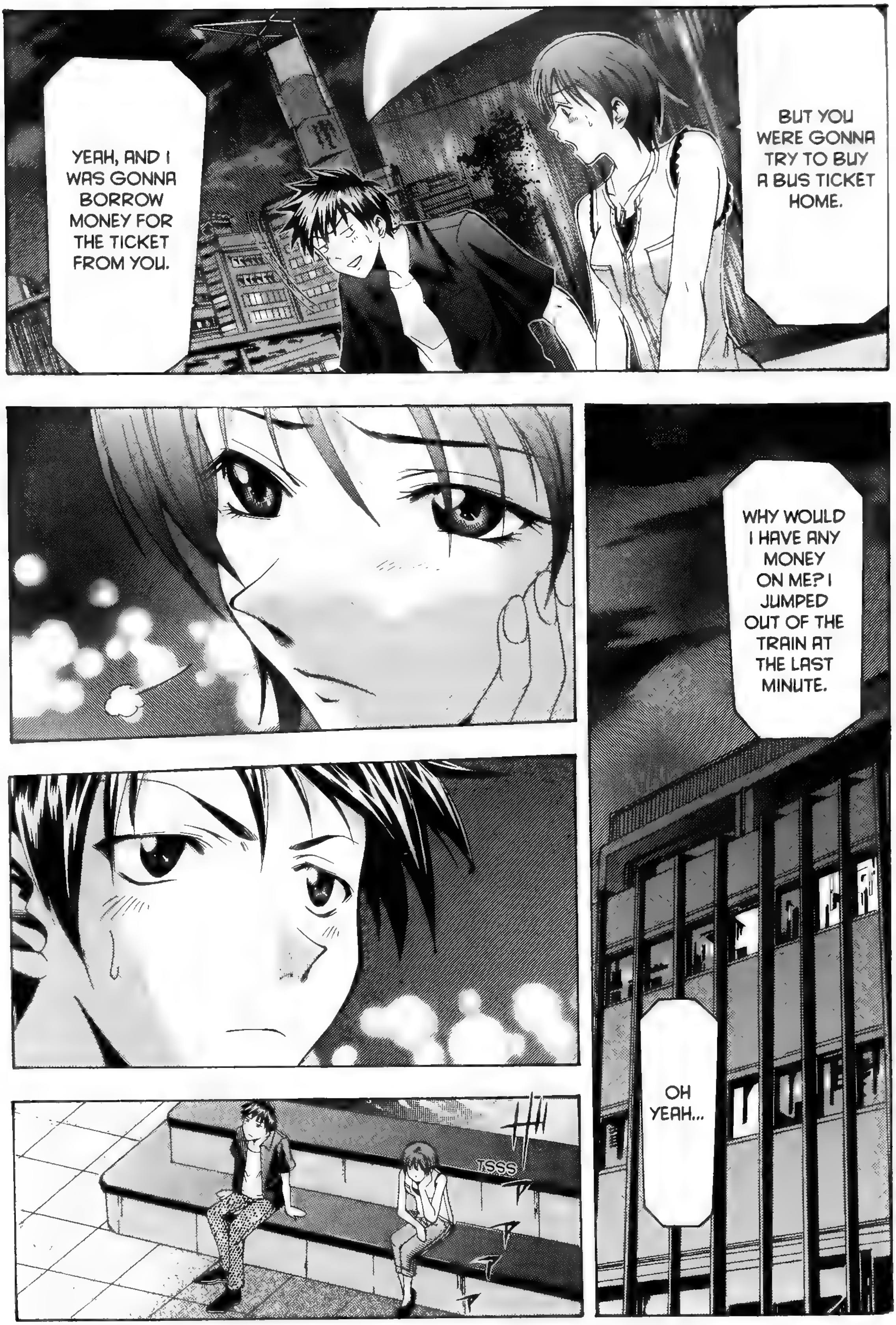
SUZUKA

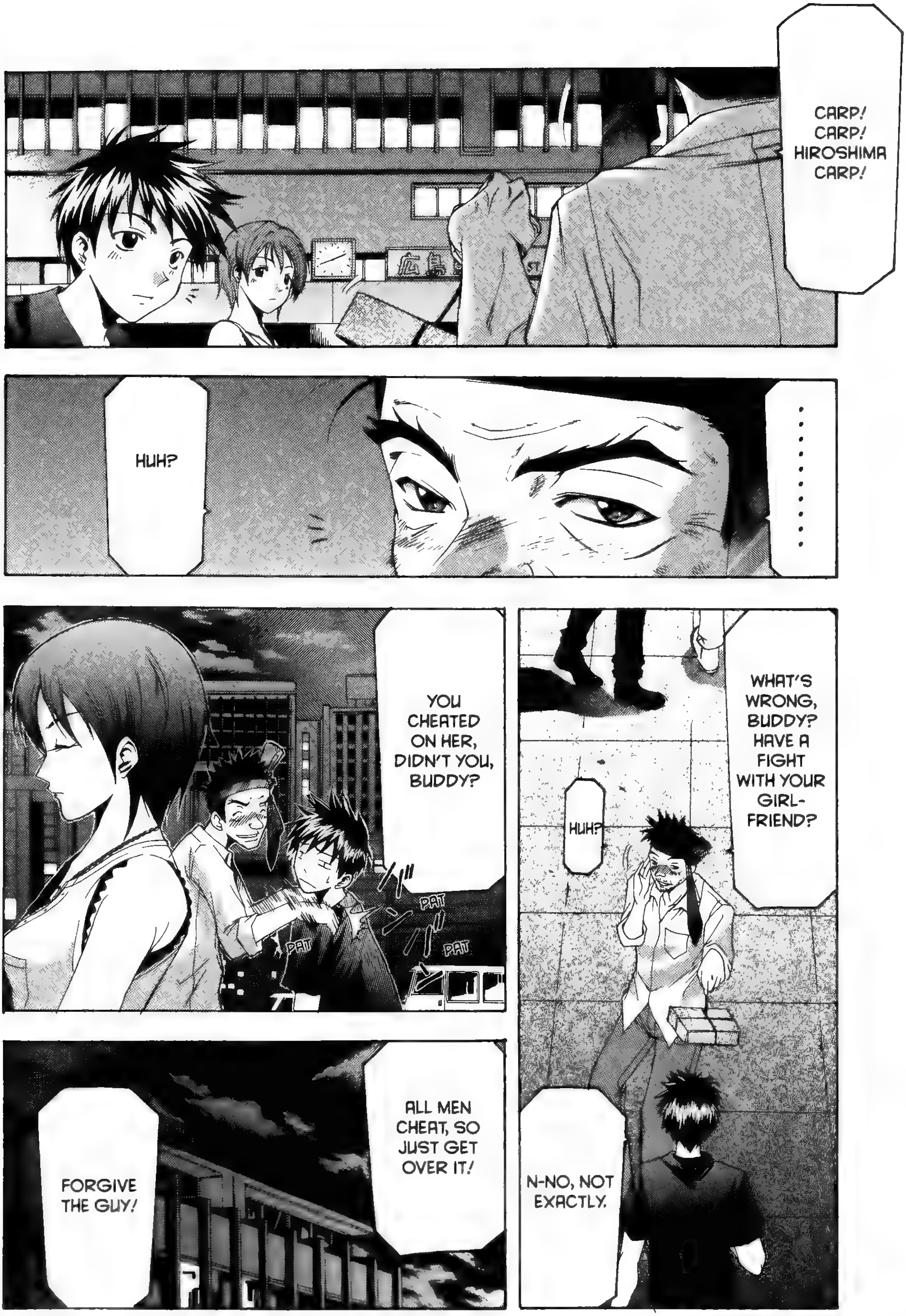
#39 TWO

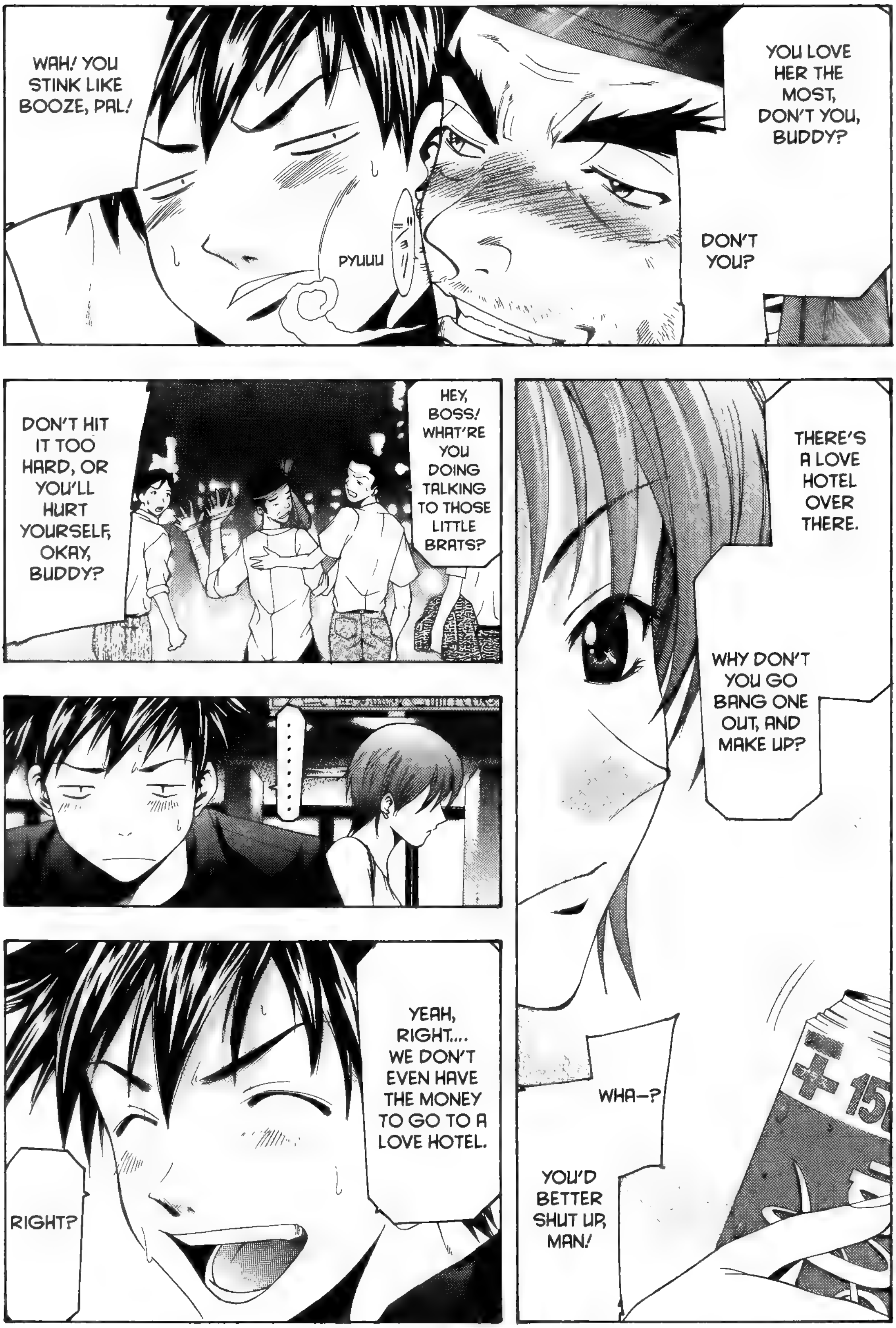

ザァァァ
TSSS
SORRY.
THIS IS ALL MY FAULT.
....
YOU'RE DAMN RIGHT IT IS!
WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO ABOUT IT?
TSSS
ザァァァ
UH...

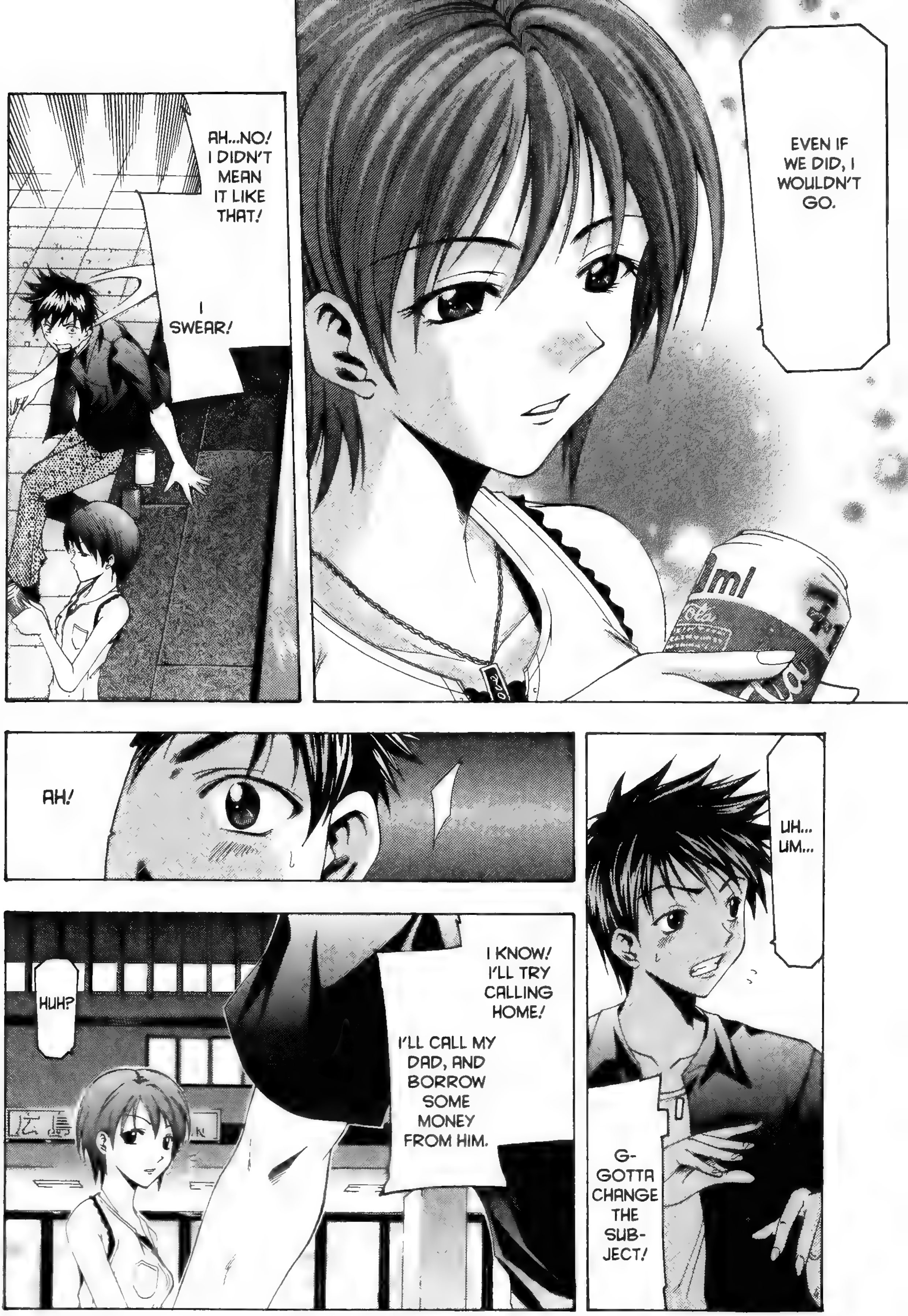

HEY, I KNOW!
LET'S GO DO KARAOKE OR GO HANG OUT IN AN ALL-NIGHT DINER.
FWUP
HUH?
WE CAN JUST KILL TIME UNTIL MORNING, AND TAKE THE FIRST BULLET TRAIN HOME.
SO, CAN YOU LEND ME A LITTLE MONEY?
I'LL PAY YOU BACK AS SOON AS WE GET TO TOKYO.
OKAY?
HOW CAN YOU EVEN ASK ME THAT? JUST USE YOUR OWN MONEY, YAMATO-KUN.
BUT...I ONLY HAVE 600 YEN*.
WHAT?

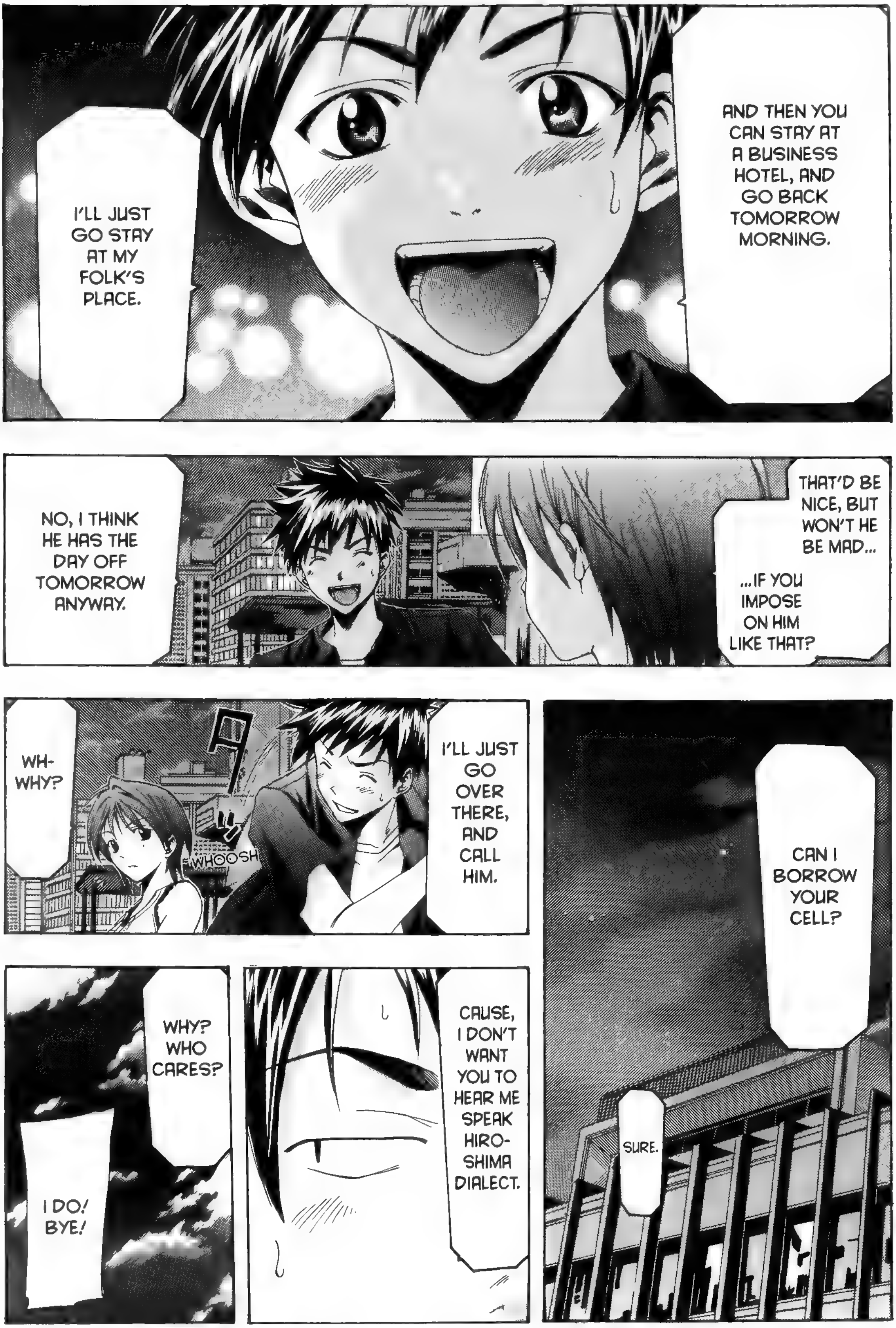
*$6

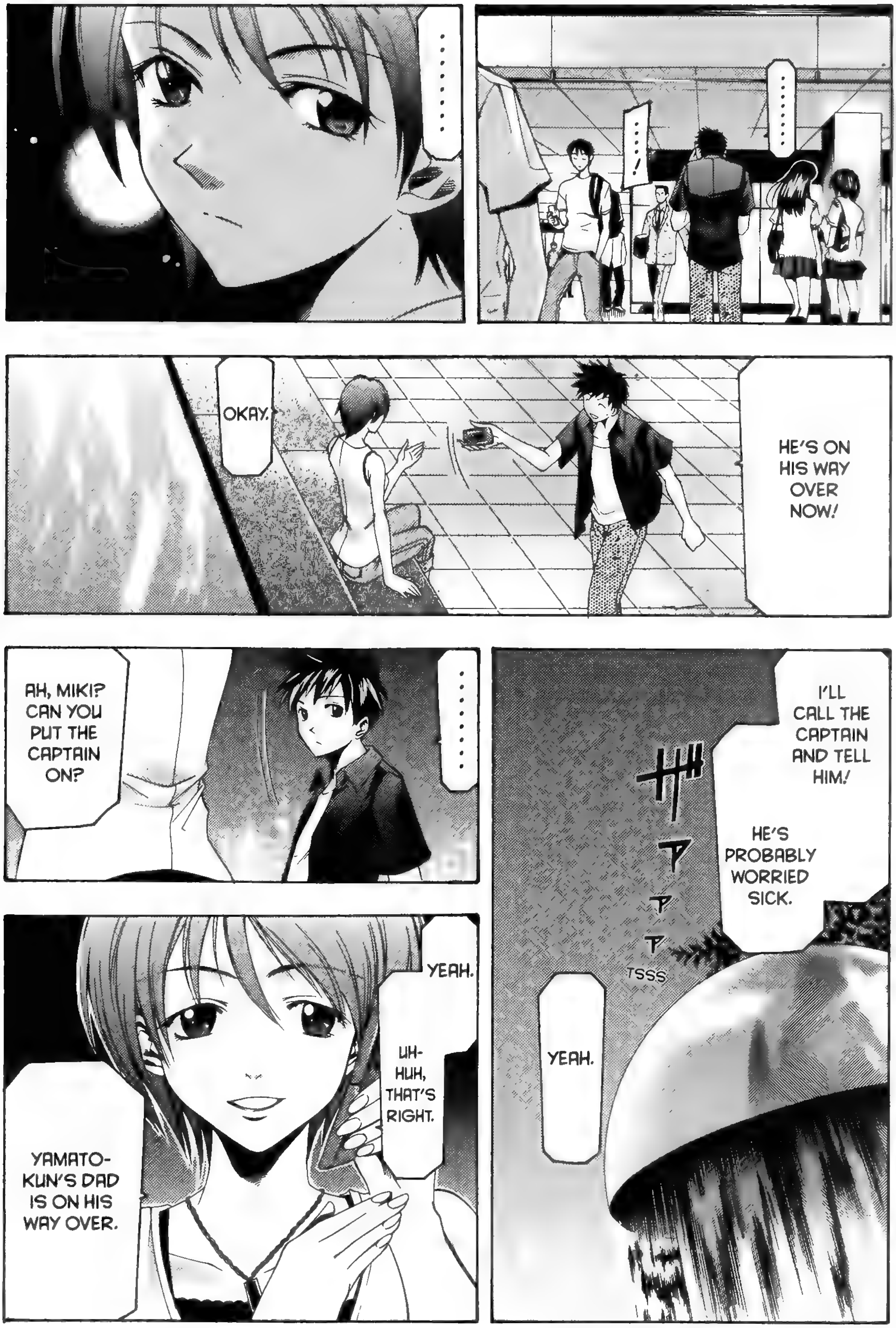

BUT YOU WERE GONNA TRY TO BUY A BUS TICKET HOME.
YEAH, AND I WAS GONNA BORROW MONEY FOR THE TICKET FROM YOU.
WHY WOULD I HAVE ANY MONEY ON ME? I JUMPED OUT OF THE TRAIN AT THE LAST MINUTE.
OH YEAH...
TSSS

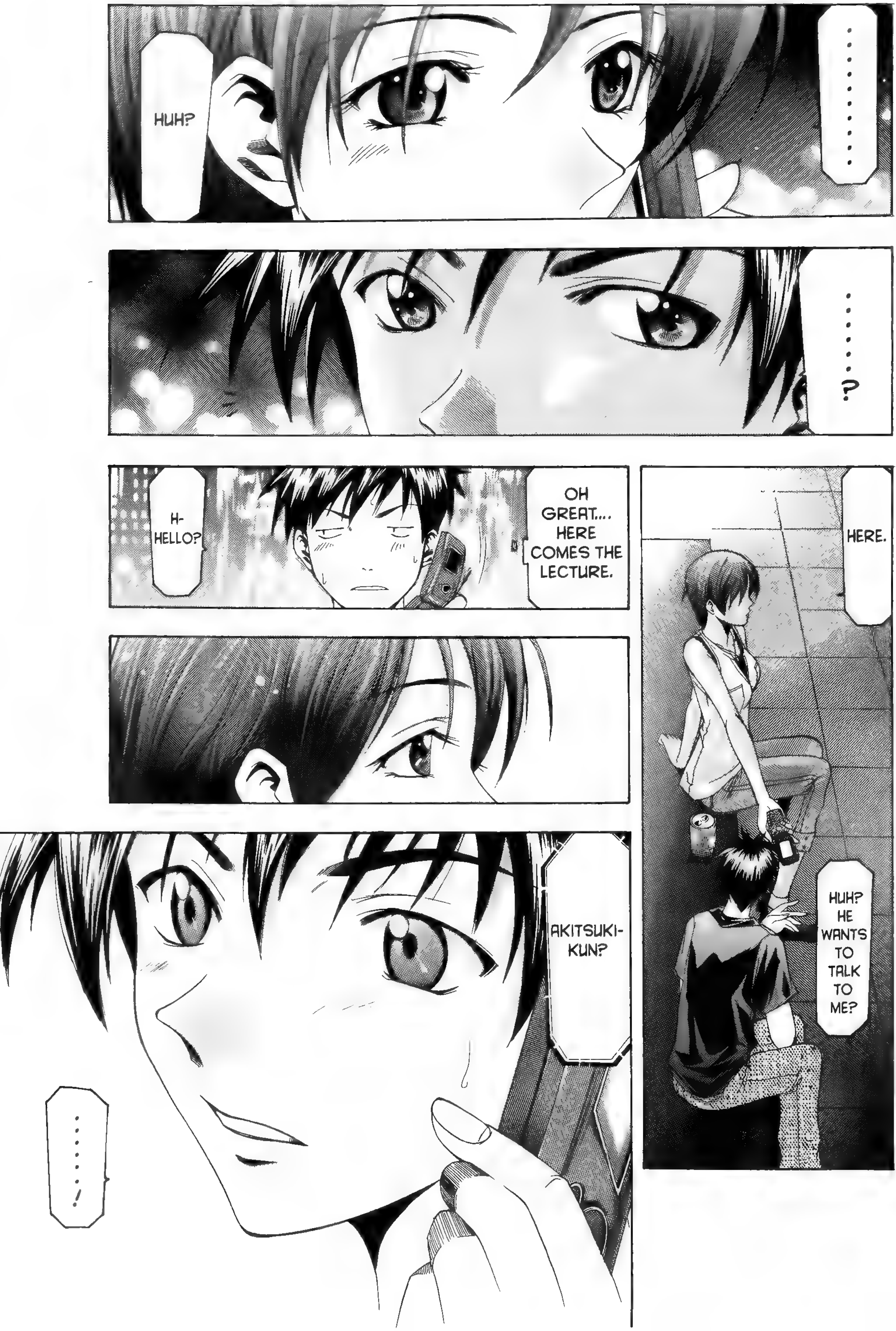

CARP!
CARP!
HIROSHIMA
CARP!
広島
......
HUH?
WHAT'S WRONG, BUDDY? HAVE A FIGHT WITH YOUR GIRLFRIEND?
HUH?
N-NO, NOT EXACTLY.
YOU CHEATED ON HER, DIDN'T YOU, BUDDY?
PAT
PAT
PAT
ALL MEN CHEAT, SO JUST GET OVER IT!
FORGIVE THE GUY!

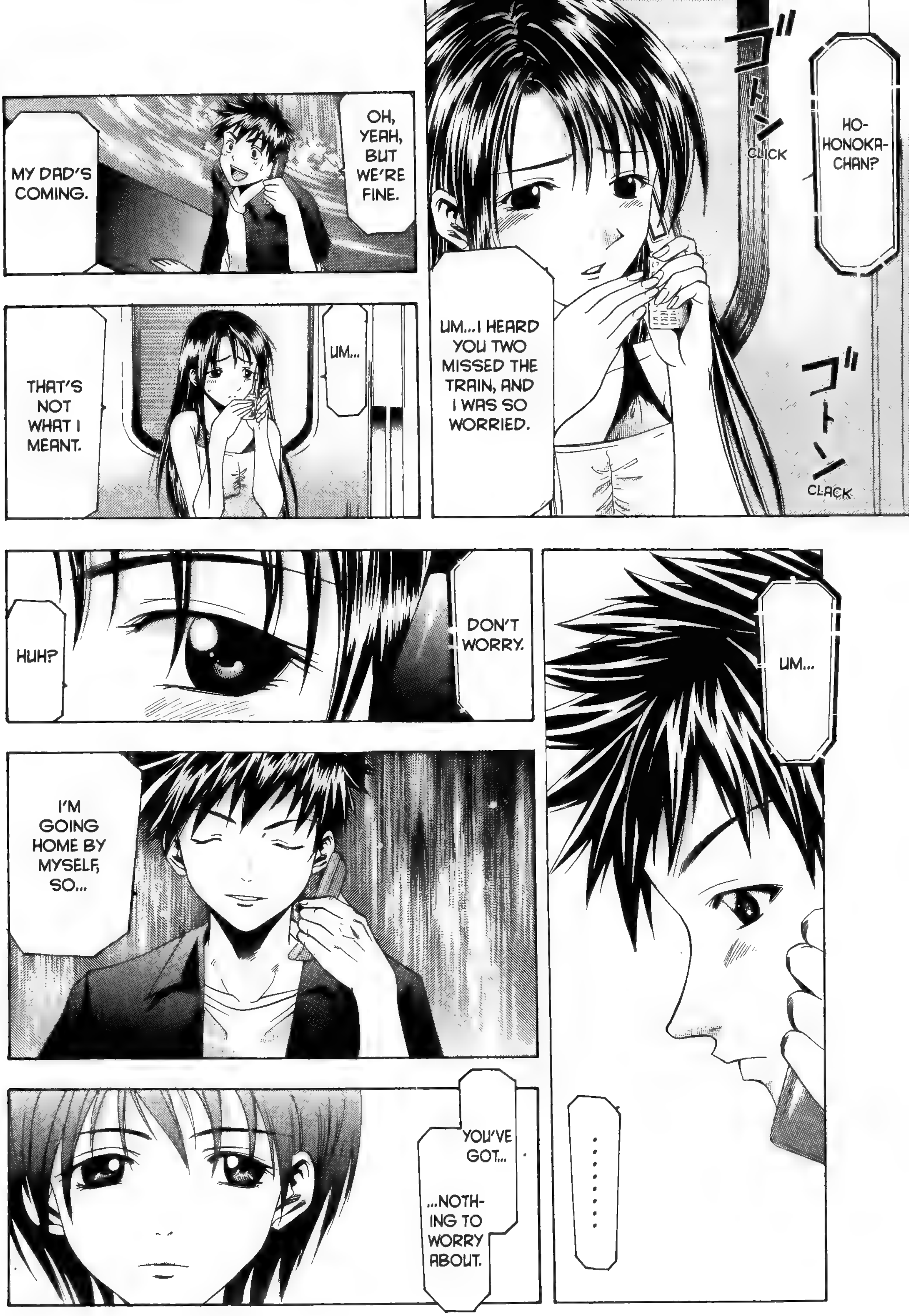

YOU LOVE HER THE MOST, DON'T YOU, BUDDY?
DON'T YOU?
PYUUU
WAH! YOU STINK LIKE BOOZE, PAL!
THERE'S A LOVE HOTEL OVER THERE.
WHY DON'T YOU GO BANG ONE OUT, AND MAKE UP?
WHA–?
YOU'D BETTER SHUT UP, MAN!
HEY, BOSS! WHAT'RE YOU DOING TALKING TO THOSE LITTLE BRATS?
DON'T HIT IT TOO HARD, OR YOU'LL HURT YOURSELF, OKAY, BUDDY?
......
YEAH, RIGHT.... WE DON'T EVEN HAVE THE MONEY TO GO TO A LOVE HOTEL.
RIGHT?

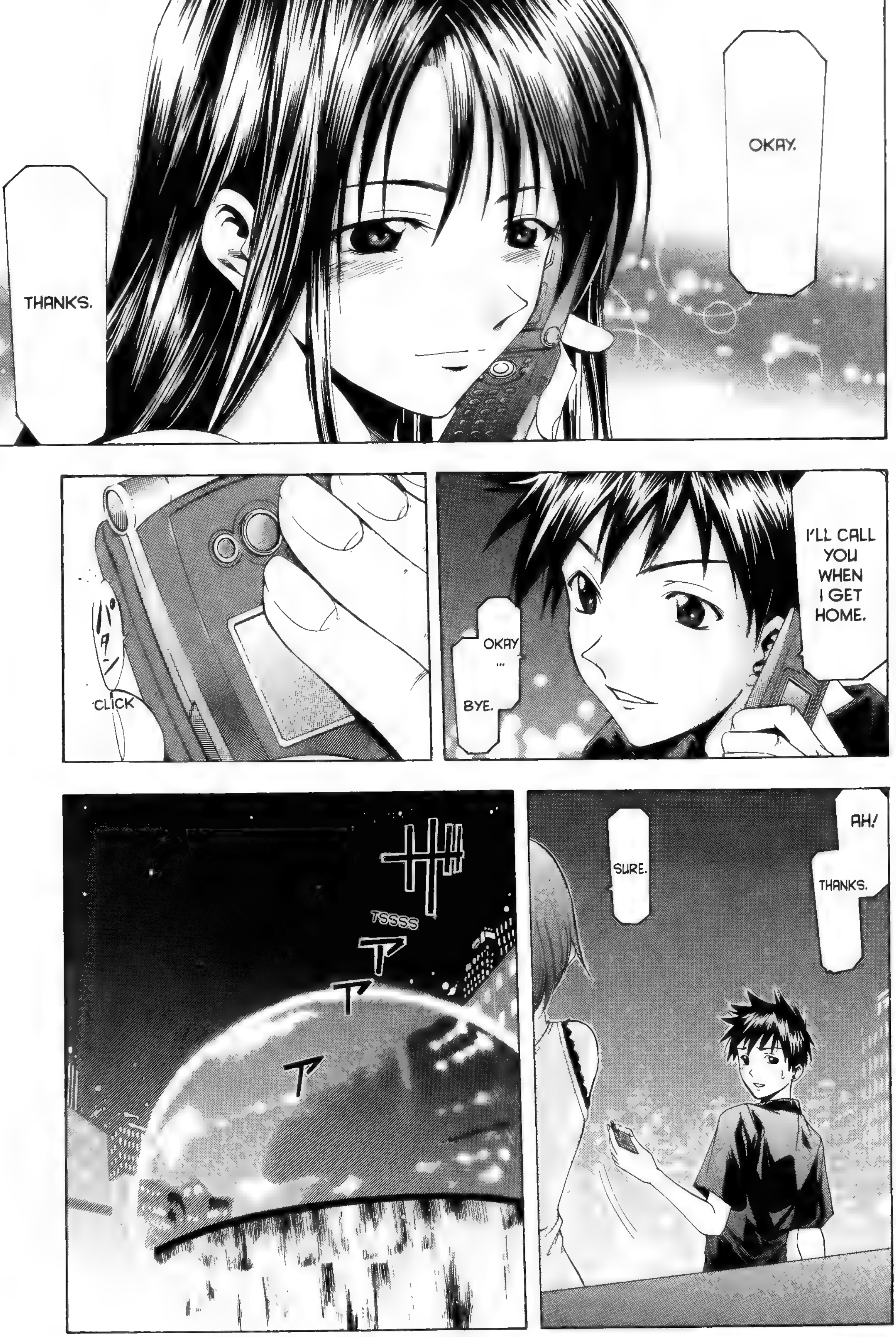

EVEN IF WE DID, I WOULDN'T GO.
AH...NO! I DIDN'T MEAN IT LIKE THAT!
I SWEAR!
UH... UM...
G-GOTTA CHANGE THE SUBJECT!
AH!
I KNOW! I'LL TRY CALLING HOME!
I'LL CALL MY DAD, AND BORROW SOME MONEY FROM HIM.
HUH?
広島

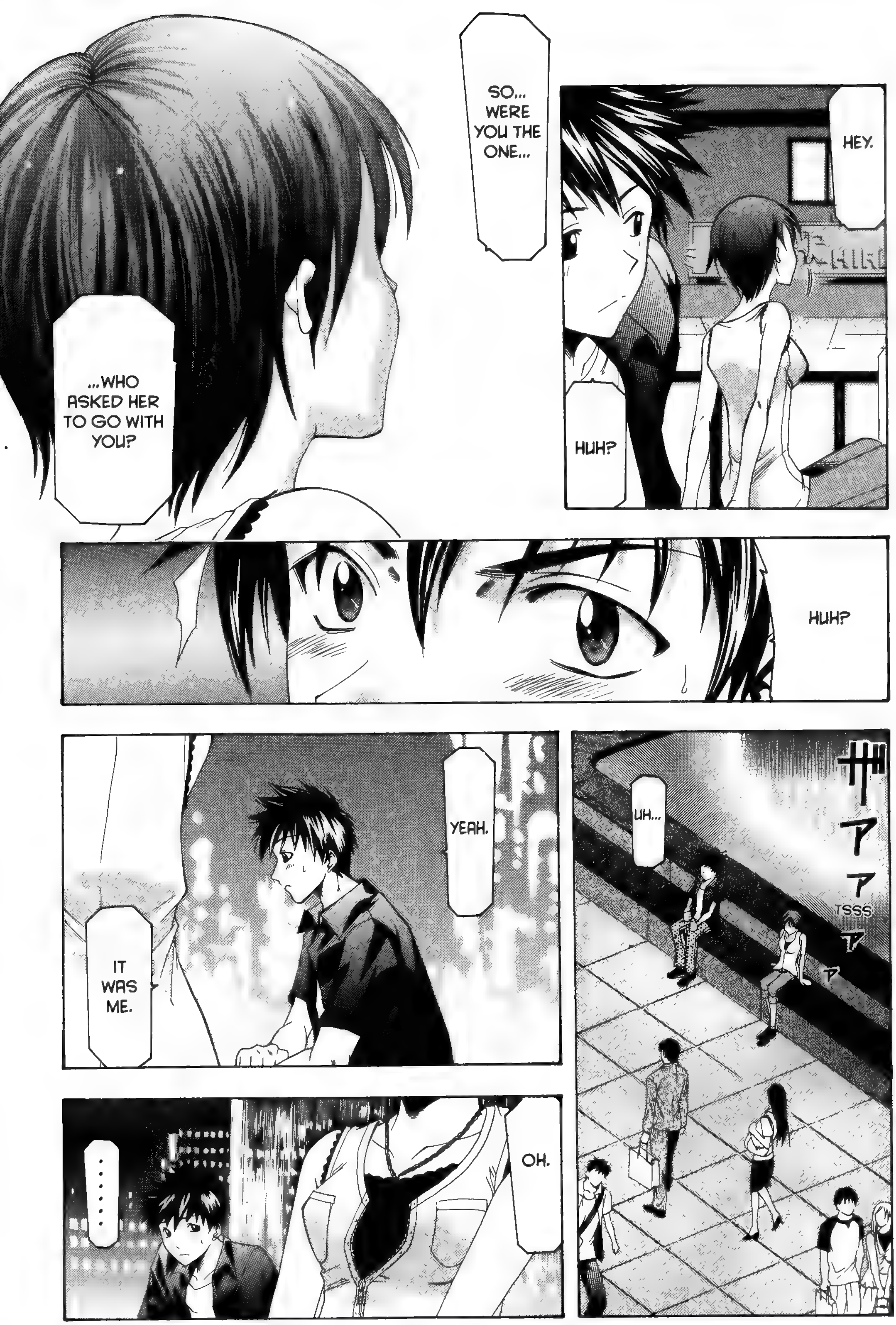

AND THEN YOU CAN STAY AT A BUSINESS HOTEL, AND GO BACK TOMORROW MORNING.
I'LL JUST GO STAY AT MY FOLK'S PLACE.
THAT'D BE NICE, BUT WON'T HE BE MAD...
...IF YOU IMPOSE ON HIM LIKE THAT?
NO, I THINK HE HAS THE DAY OFF TOMORROW ANYWAY.
CAN I BORROW YOUR CELL?
SURE.
I'LL JUST GO OVER THERE, AND CALL HIM.
WHOOSH
WH- WHY?
CAUSE, I DON'T WANT YOU TO HEAR ME SPEAK HIROSHIMA DIALECT.
WHY? WHO CARES?
I DO! BYE!

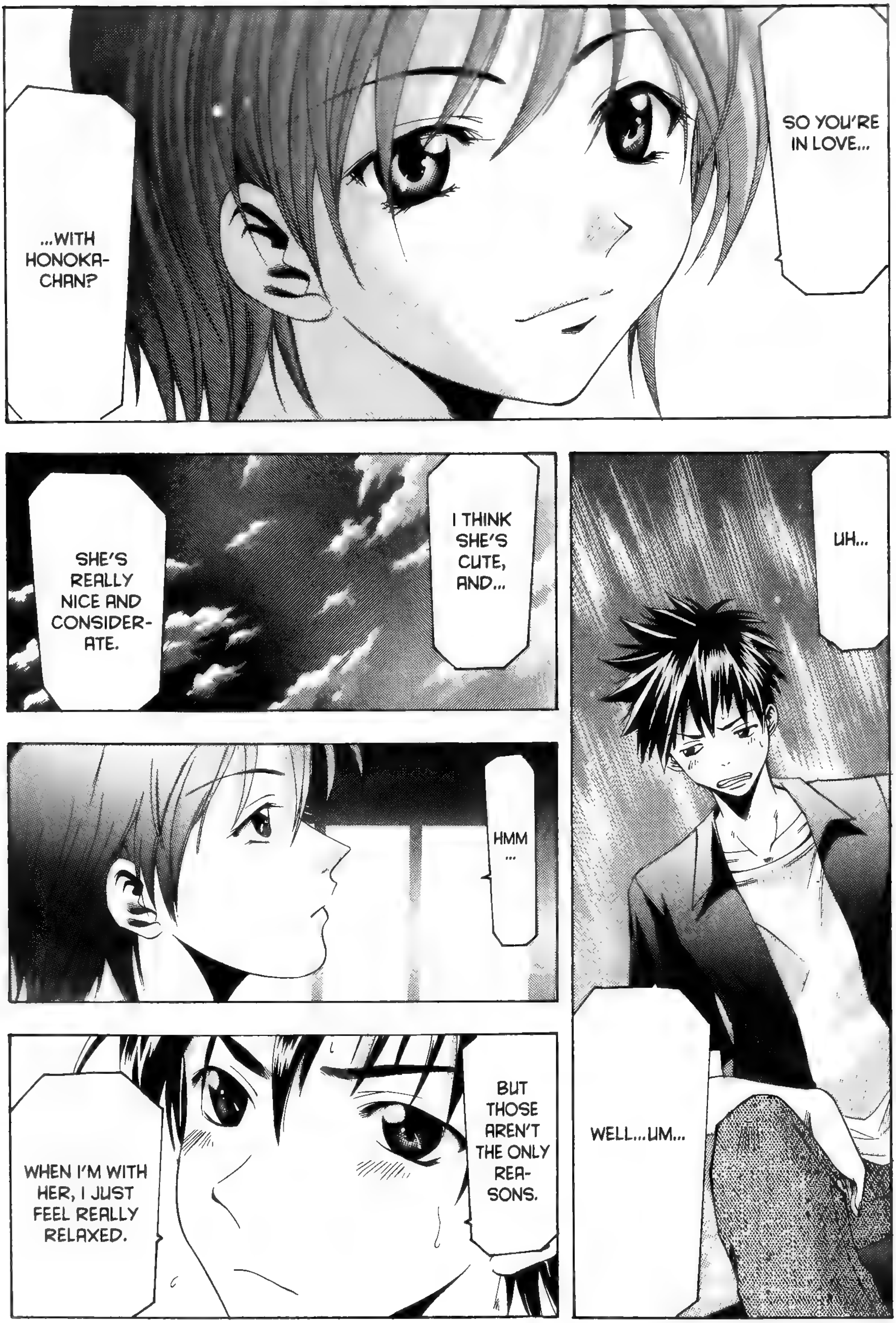

......
....!
......
HE'S ON HIS WAY OVER NOW!
OKAY.
I'LL CALL THE CAPTAIN AND TELL HIM!
HE'S PROBABLY WORRIED SICK.
TSSS
YEAH.
......
AH, MIKI? CAN YOU PUT THE CAPTAIN ON?
YEAH.
UH-HUH, THAT'S RIGHT.
YAMATO-KUN'S DAD IS ON HIS WAY OVER.

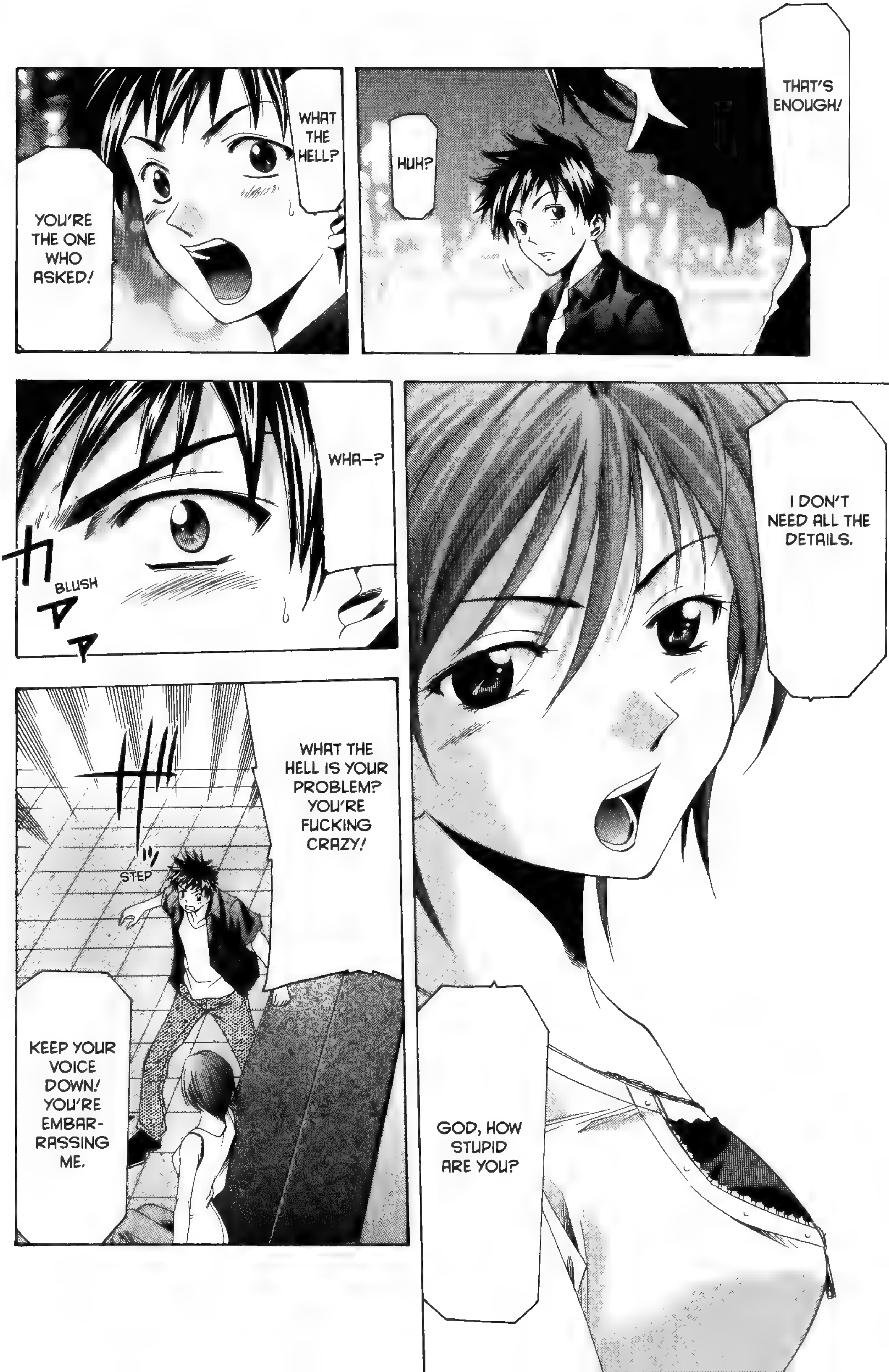

....
HUH?
.......?
OH GREAT.... HERE COMES THE LECTURE.
H- HELLO?
HERE.
HUH? HE WANTS TO TALK TO ME?
AKITSUKI-KUN?
.......!

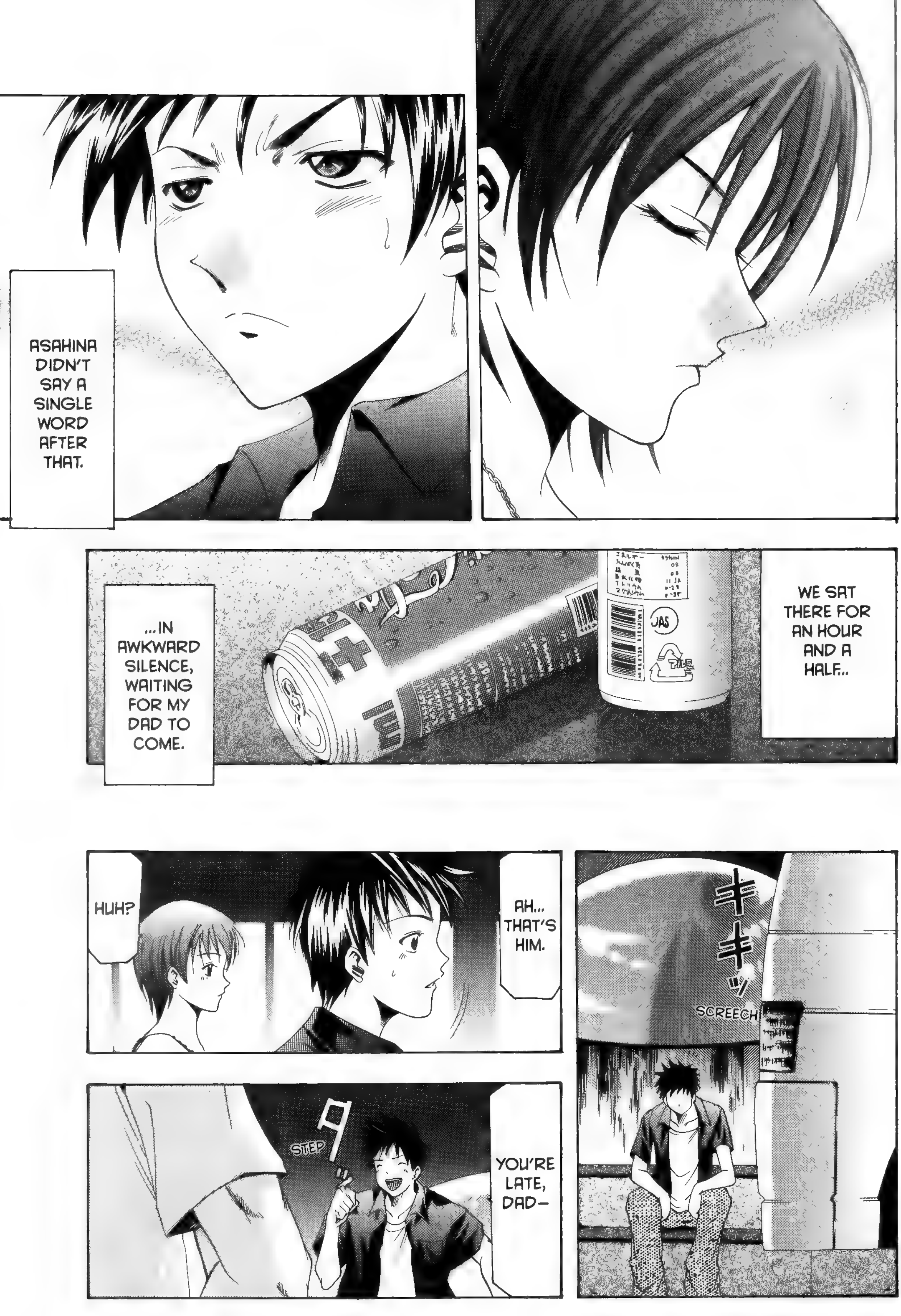

HO-HONOKA-CHAN?
ゴトン
CLICK
UM...I HEARD YOU TWO MISSED THE TRAIN, AND I WAS SO WORRIED.
ゴトン
CLACK
OH, YEAH, BUT WE'RE FINE.
MY DAD'S COMING.
UM...
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.
UM...
DON'T WORRY.
HUH?
I'M GOING HOME BY MYSELF, SO...
YOU'VE GOT...
...NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.
....

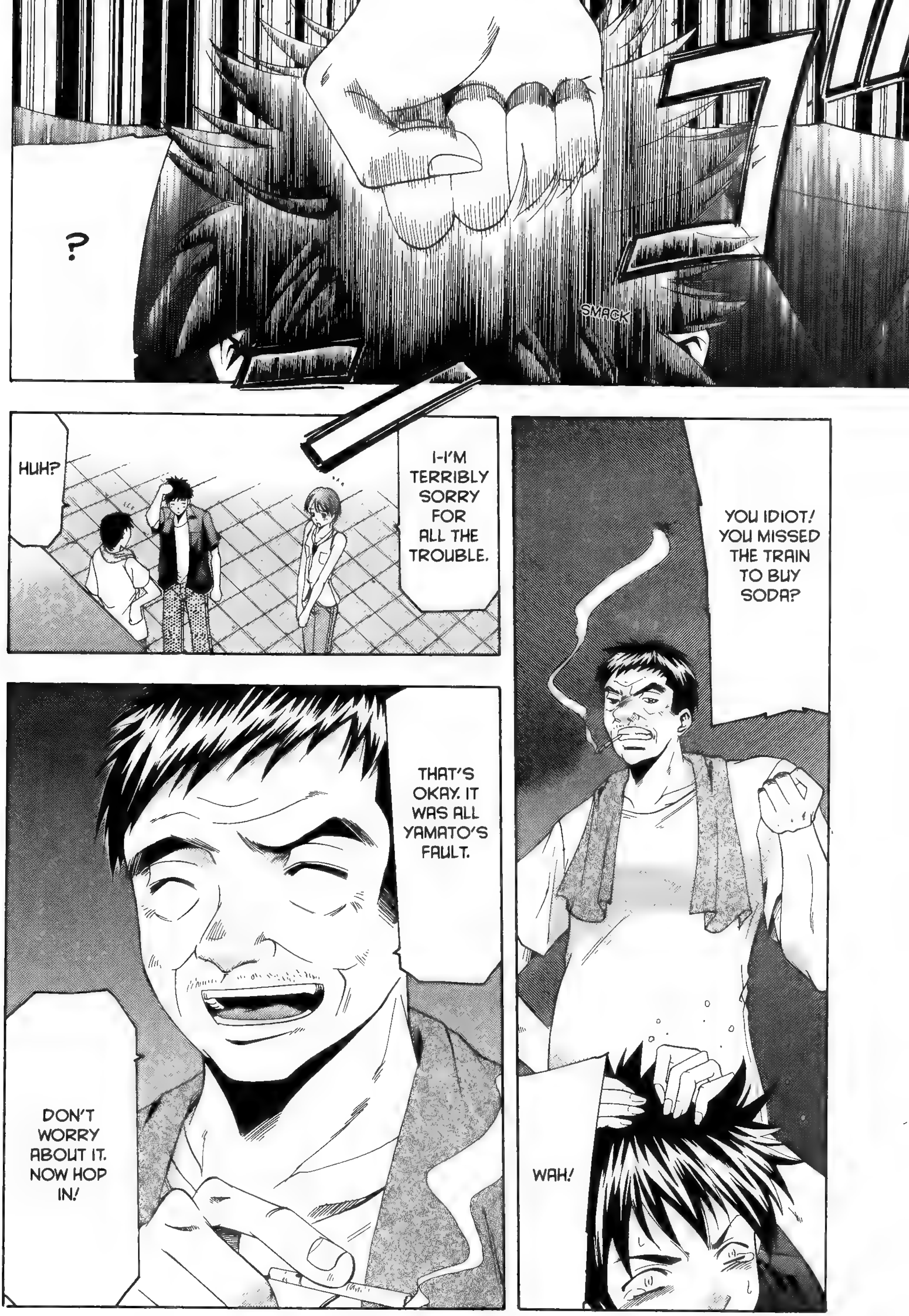

OKAY.
THANKS.
I'LL CALL YOU WHEN I GET HOME.
OKAY ... BYE.
CLICK
AH!
THANKS.
SURE.
TSSSS

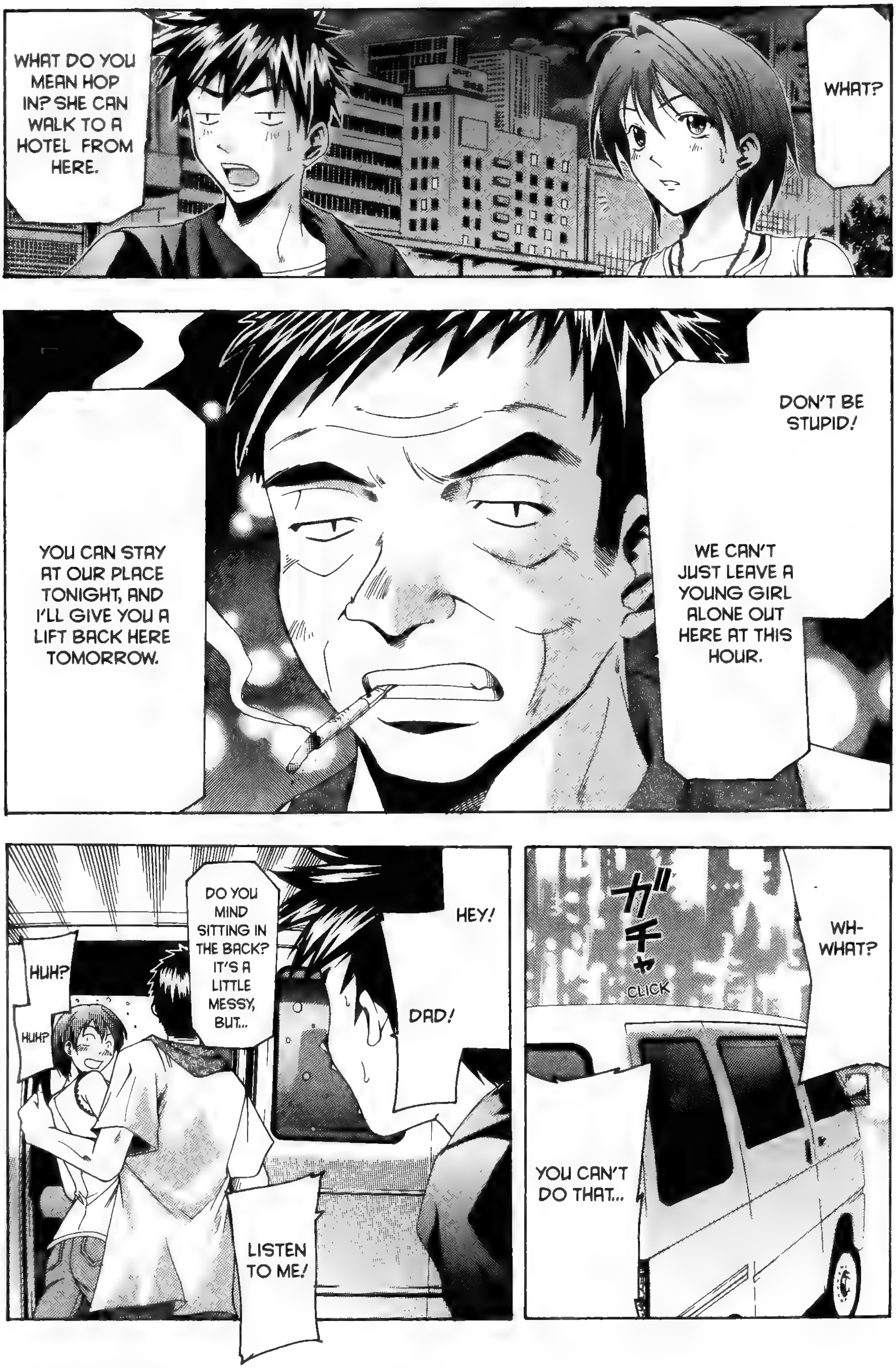

HEY.
HUH?
SO... WERE YOU THE ONE...
...WHO ASKED HER TO GO WITH YOU?
HUH?
ザアアァァ
TSSS
UH...
YEAH.
IT WAS ME.
OH.
......

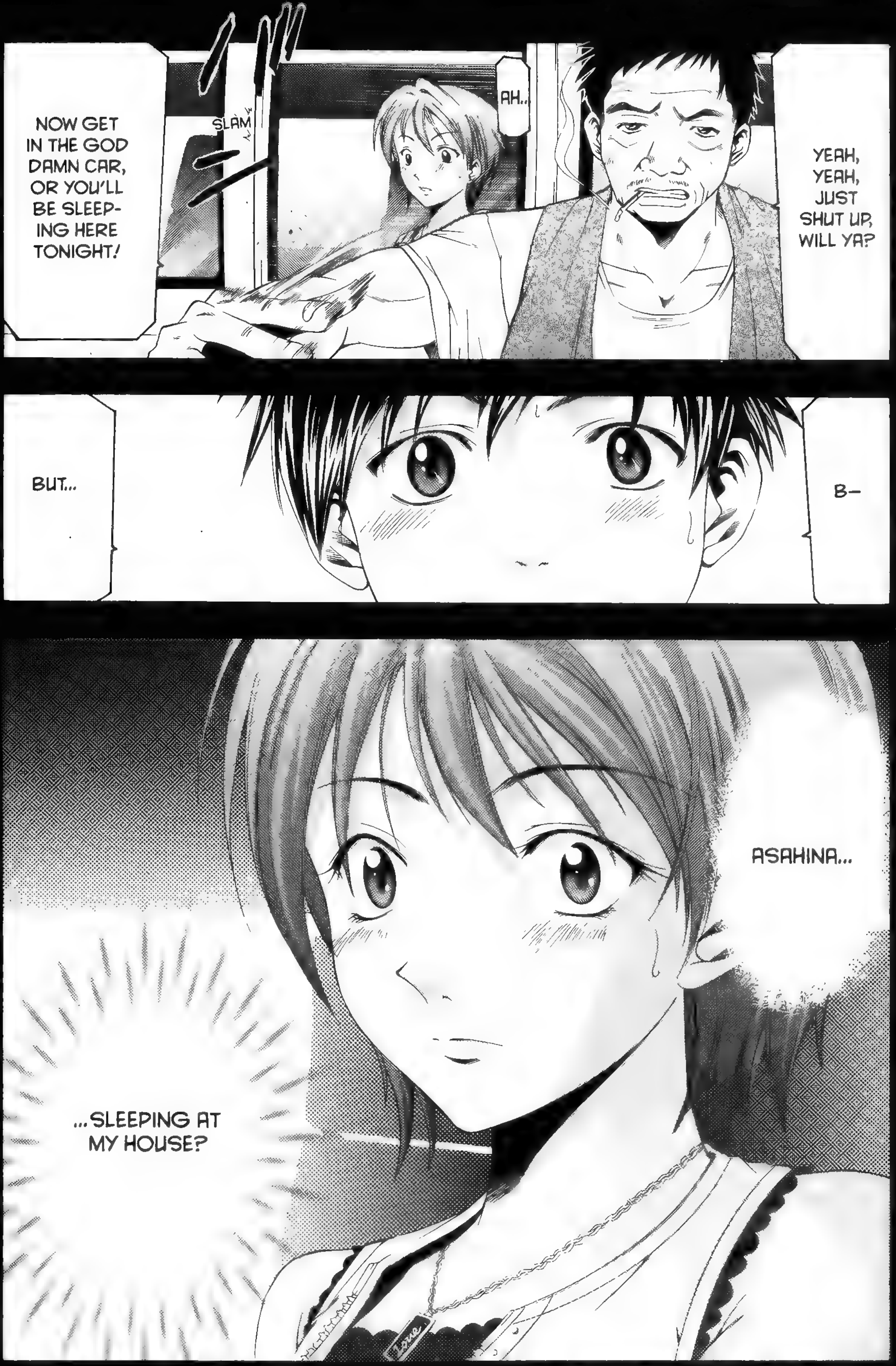

SO YOU'RE IN LOVE...
...WITH HONOKA-CHAN?
UH...
WELL...UM...
I THINK SHE'S CUTE, AND...
SHE'S REALLY NICE AND CONSIDERATE.
HMM...
BUT THOSE AREN'T THE ONLY REASONS.
WHEN I'M WITH HER, I JUST FEEL REALLY RELAXED.

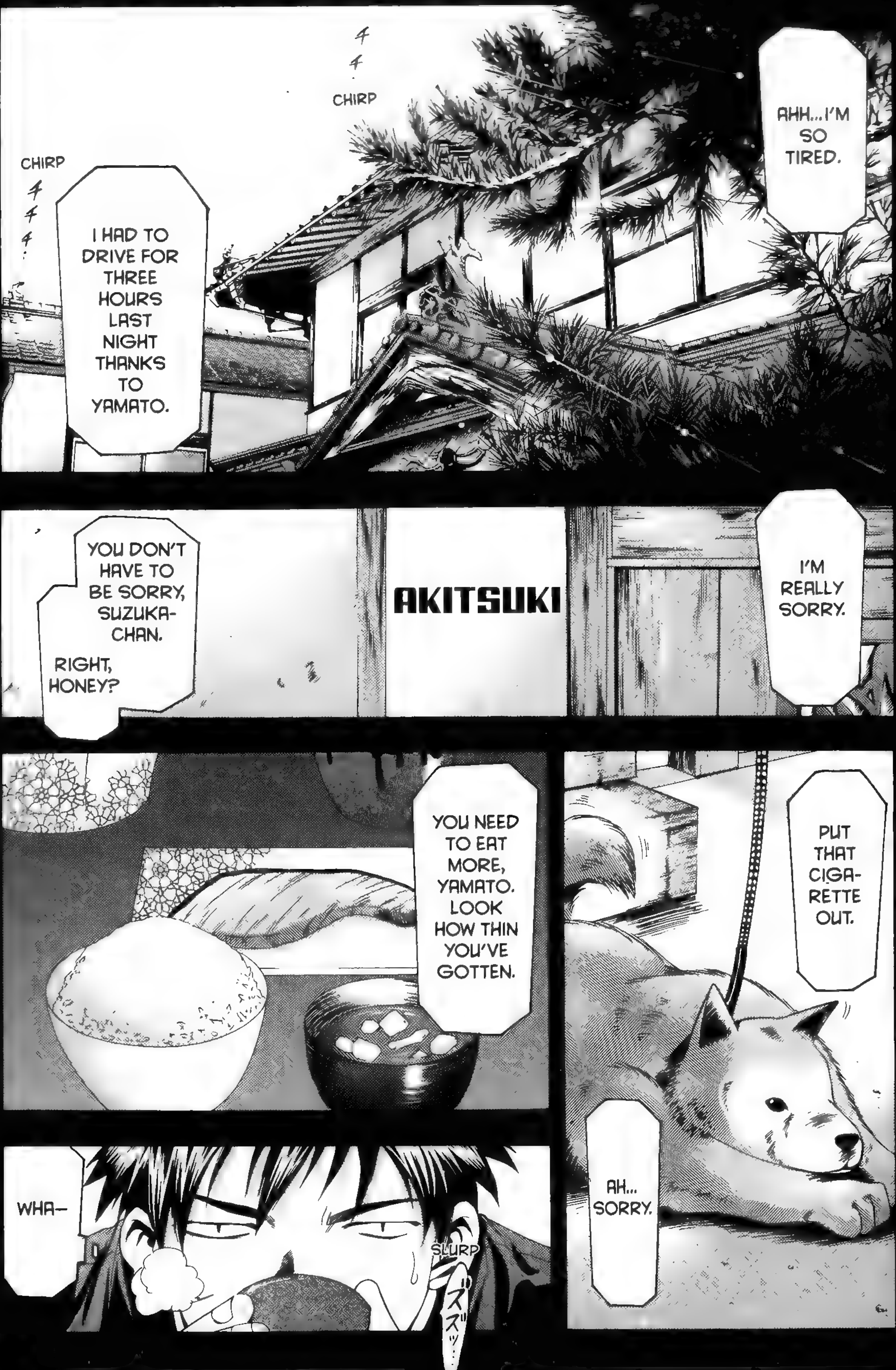

THAT'S ENOUGH!
HUH?
WHAT THE HELL?
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO ASKED!
I DON'T NEED ALL THE DETAILS.
GOD, HOW STUPID ARE YOU?
WHA–?
BLUSH
WHAT THE HELL IS YOUR PROBLEM? YOU'RE FUCKING CRAZY!
STEP
KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN! YOU'RE EMBARRASSING ME.

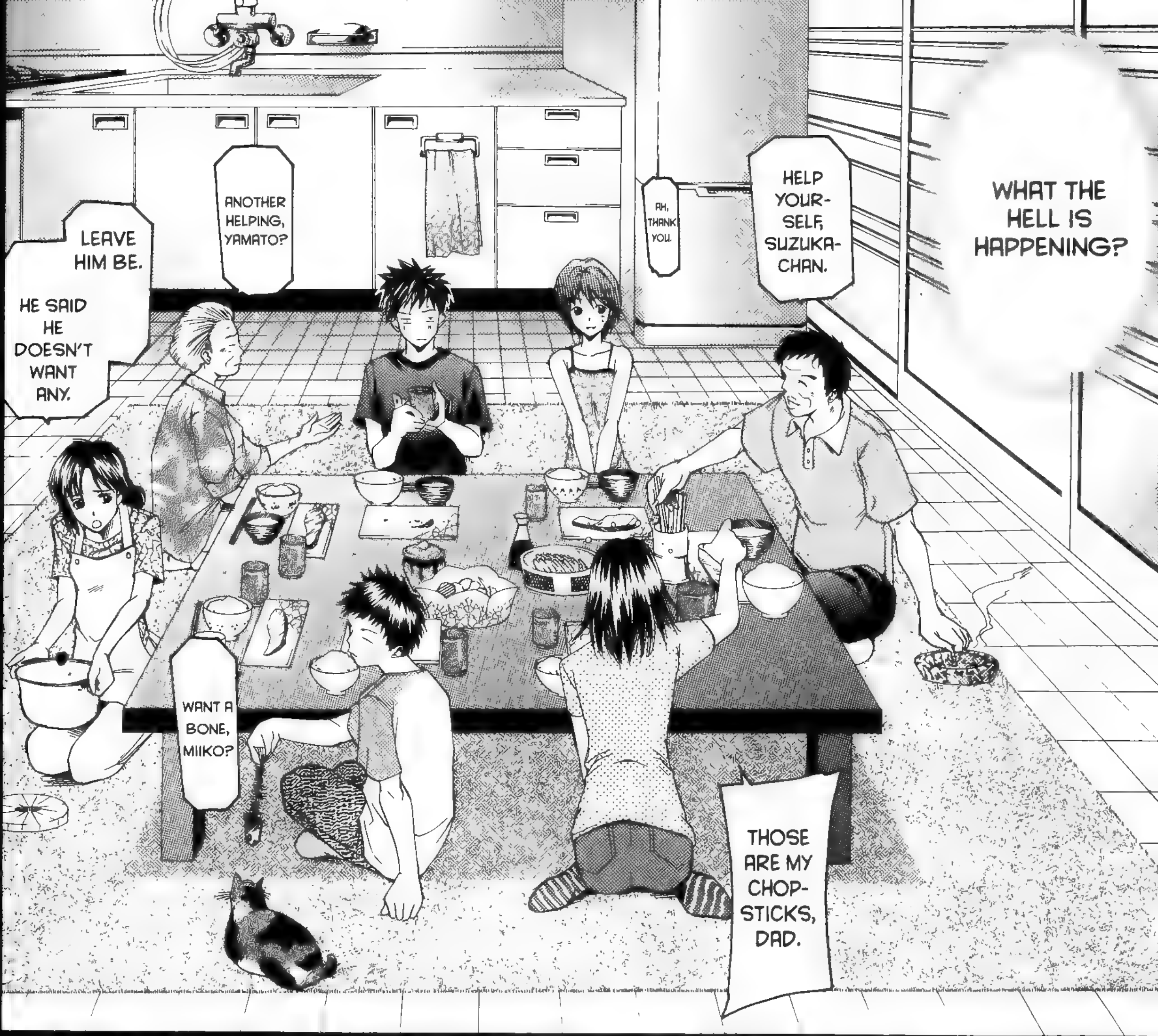

ASAHINA DIDN'T SAY A SINGLE WORD AFTER THAT.
WE SAT THERE FOR AN HOUR AND A HALF...
...IN AWKWARD SILENCE, WAITING FOR MY DAD TO COME.
キキッ
SCREECH
AH... THAT'S HIM.
HUH?
YOU'RE LATE, DAD—
STEP


?
SMACK
YOU IDIOT! YOU MISSED THE TRAIN TO BUY SODA?
WAH!
I-I'M TERRIBLY SORRY FOR ALL THE TROUBLE.
HUH?
THAT'S OKAY. IT WAS ALL YAMATO'S FAULT.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. NOW HOP IN!


WHAT?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN HOP IN? SHE CAN WALK TO A HOTEL FROM HERE.
DON'T BE STUPID!
WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE A YOUNG GIRL ALONE OUT HERE AT THIS HOUR.
YOU CAN STAY AT OUR PLACE TONIGHT, AND I'LL GIVE YOU A LIFT BACK HERE TOMORROW.
WH-WHAT?
ガチャ
CLICK
YOU CAN'T DO THAT...
HEY!
DAD!
DO YOU MIND SITTING IN THE BACK? IT'S A LITTLE MESSY, BUT...
HUH?
HUH?
LISTEN TO ME!

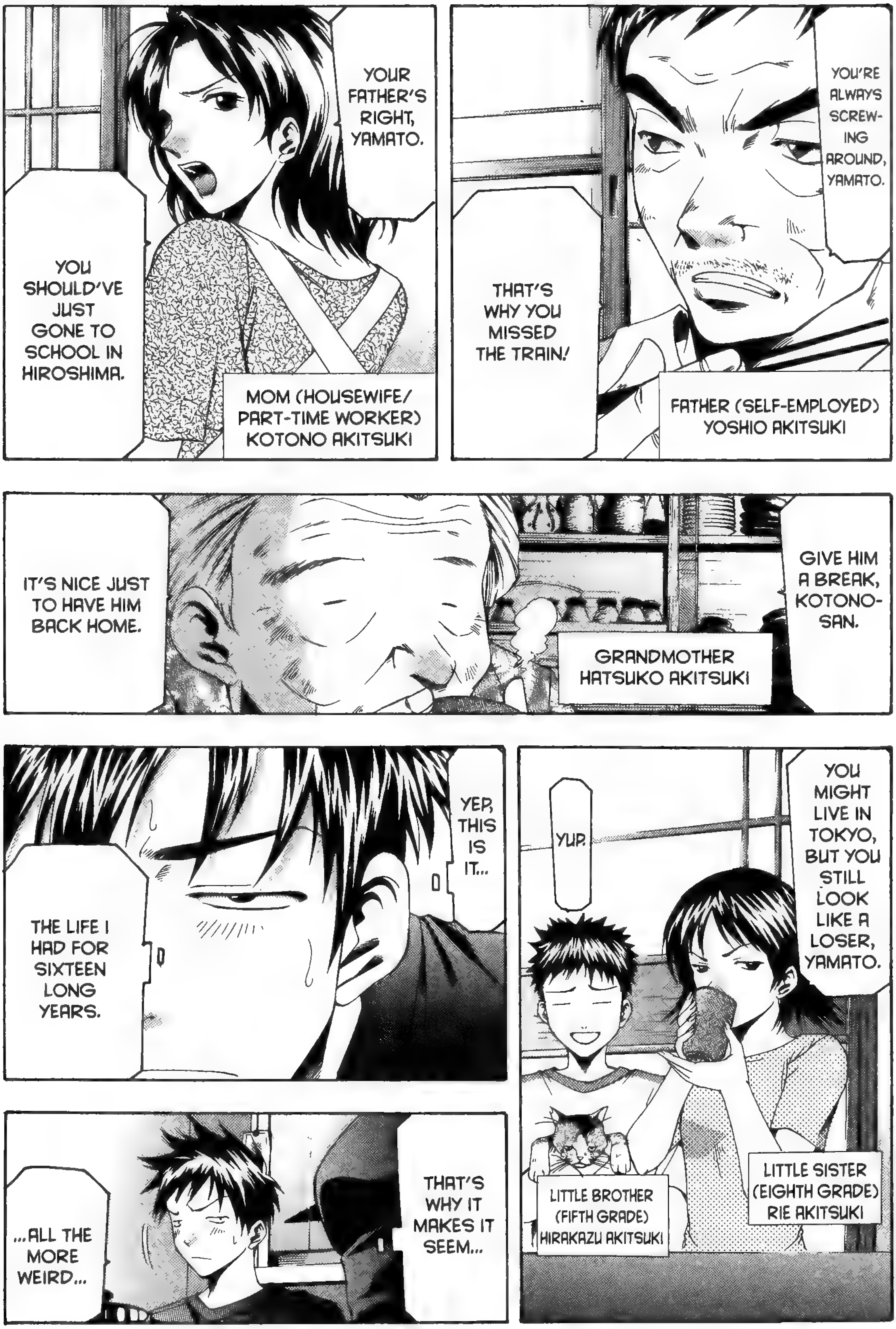

YEAH, YEAH, JUST SHUT UP, WILL YA?
AH..
SLAM
NOW GET IN THE GOD DAMN CAR, OR YOU'LL BE SLEEPING HERE TONIGHT!
B–
BUT...
ASAHINA...
...SLEEPING AT MY HOUSE?

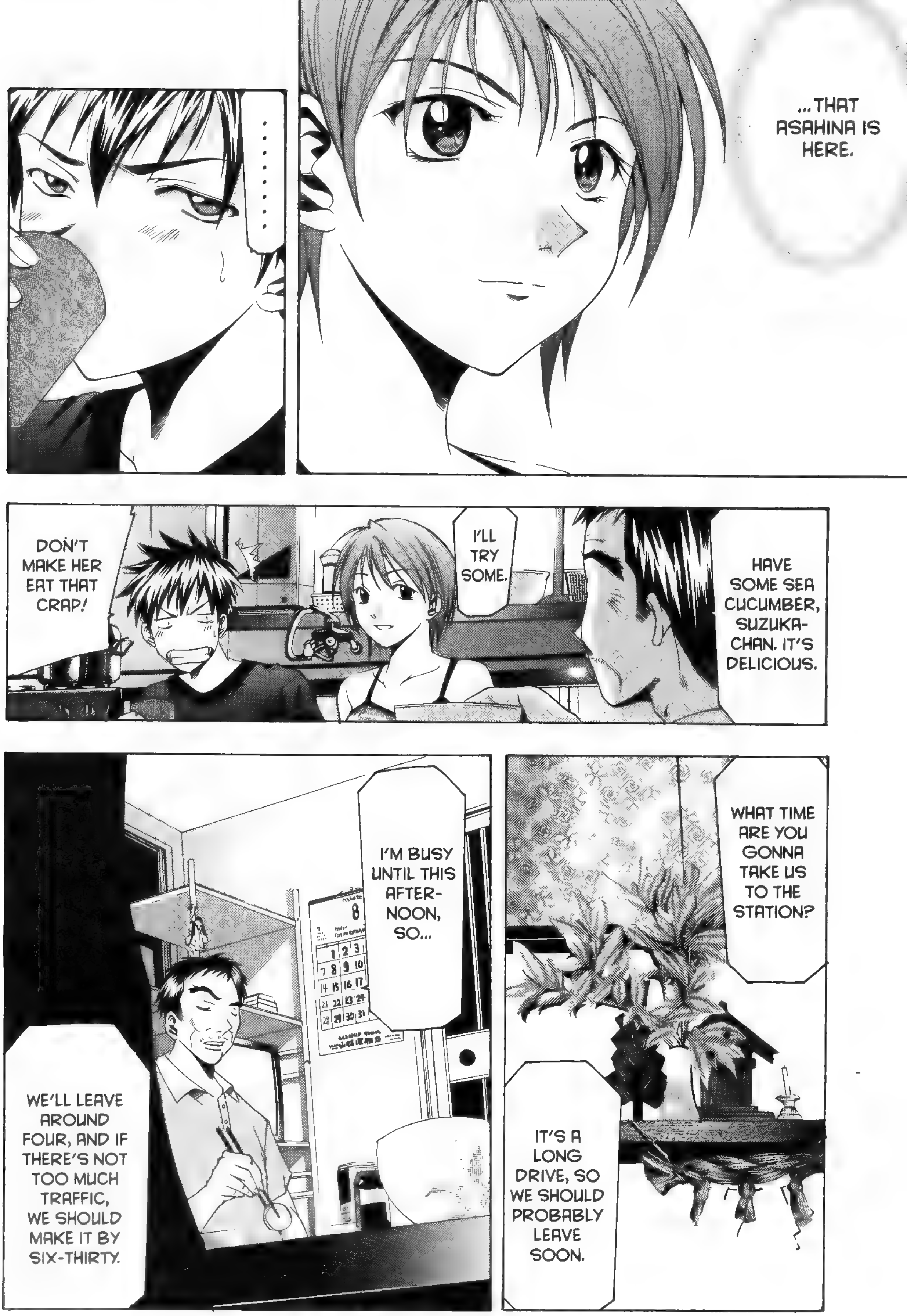

チ
チ
CHIRP
AHH...I'M SO TIRED.
CHIRP
チ
チ
チ
I HAD TO DRIVE FOR THREE HOURS LAST NIGHT THANKS TO YAMATO.
I'M REALLY SORRY.
AKITSUKI
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE SORRY, SUZUKA-CHAN.
RIGHT, HONEY?
PUT THAT CIGARETTE OUT.
AH... SORRY.
YOU NEED TO EAT MORE, YAMATO. LOOK HOW THIN YOU'VE GOTTEN.
SLURP
ズズッ
WHA—

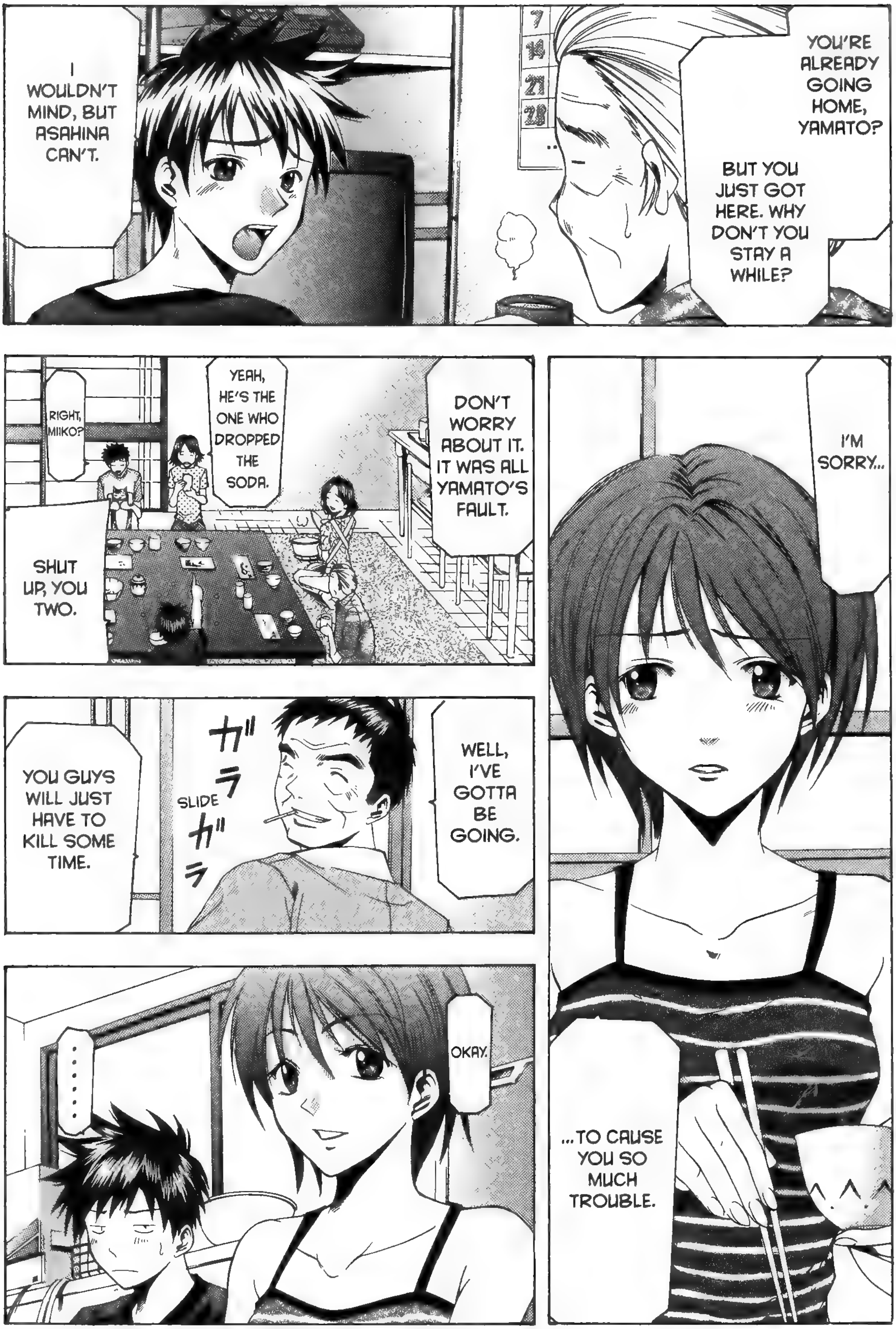

WHAT THE HELL IS HAPPENING?
HELP YOURSELF, SUZUKA-CHAN.
AH, THANK YOU.
ANOTHER HELPING, YAMATO?
LEAVE HIM BE.
HE SAID HE DOESN'T WANT ANY.
THOSE ARE MY CHOPSTICKS, DAD.
WANT A BONE, MIIKO?

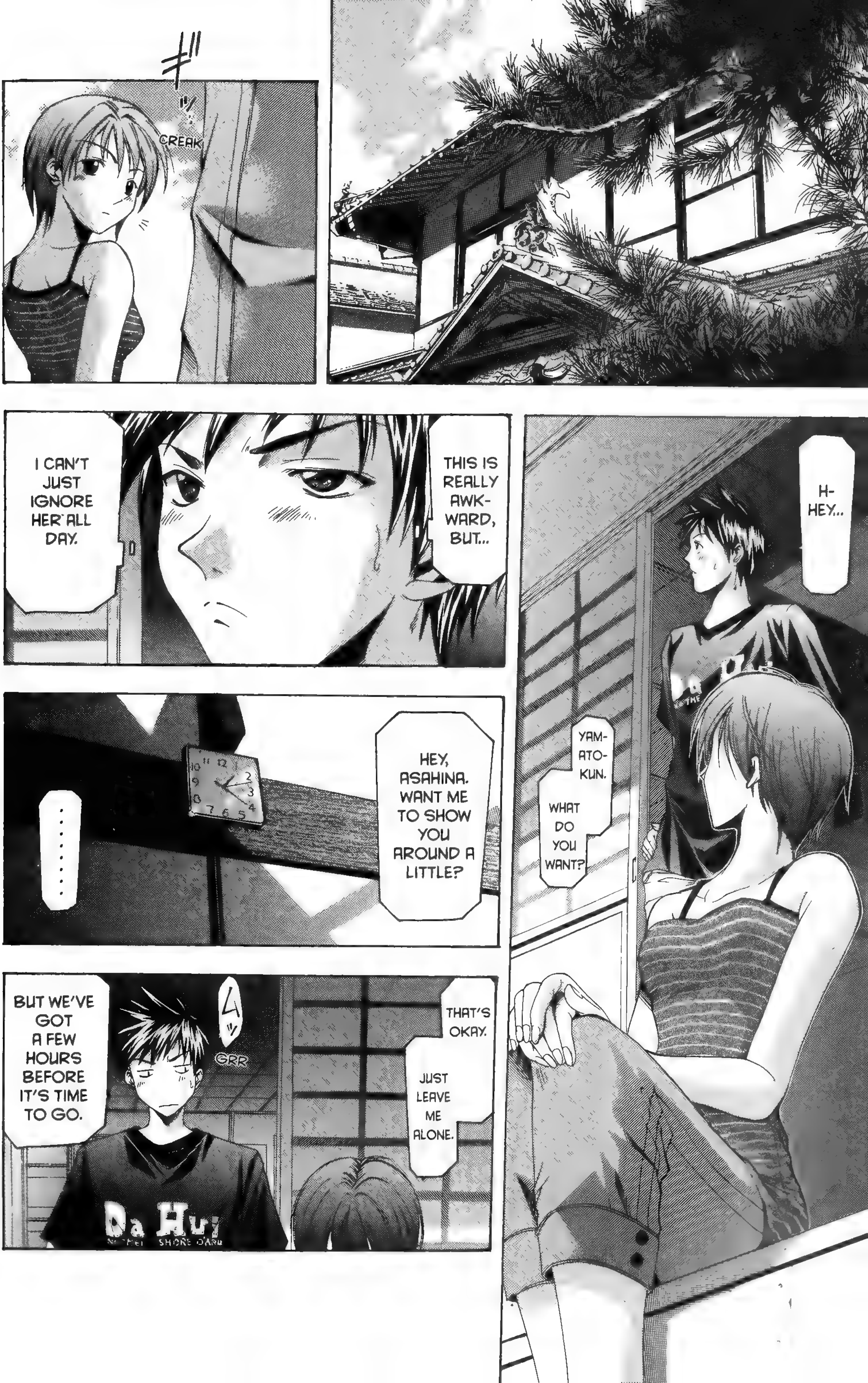
SUZUKA

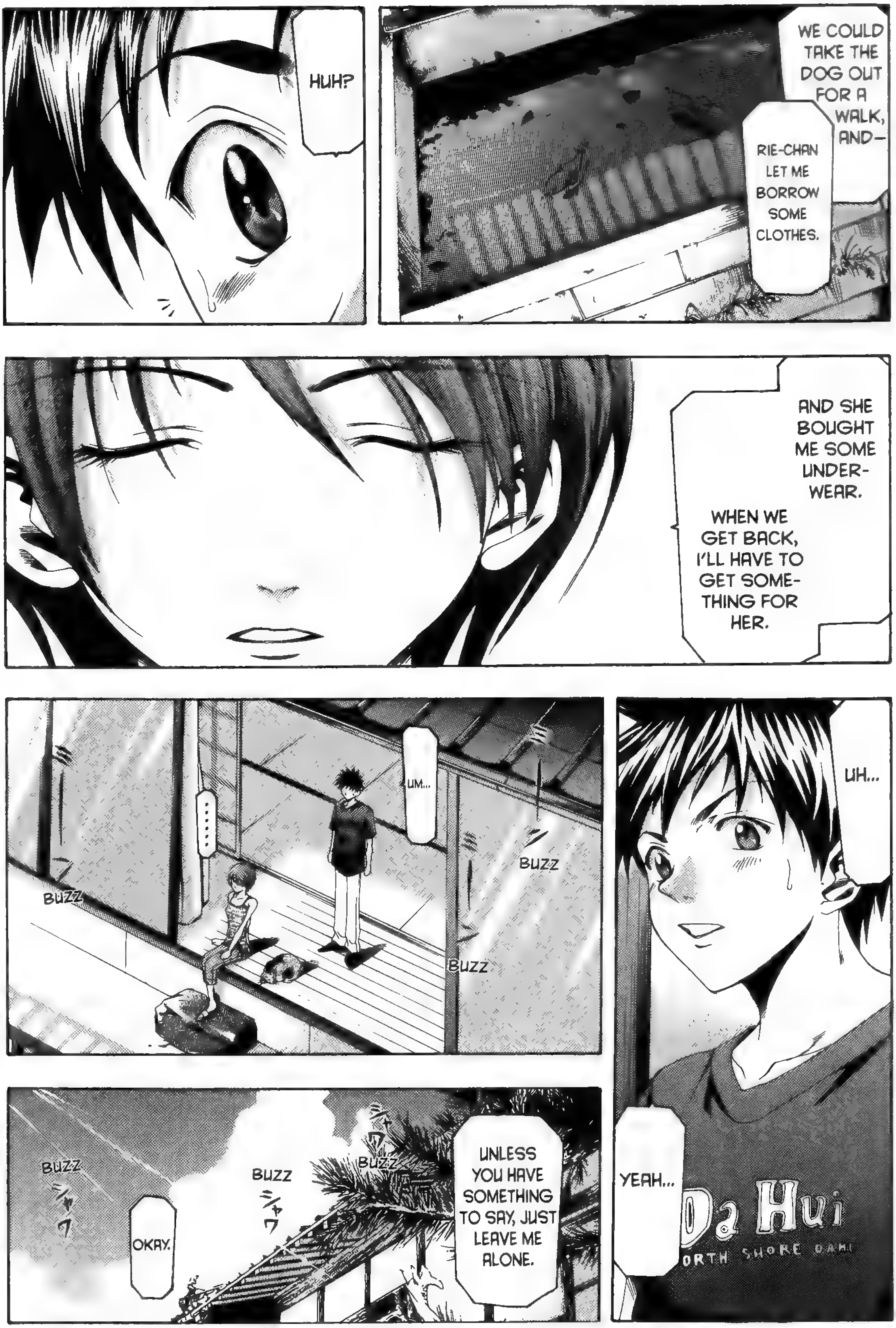
#40 HOME

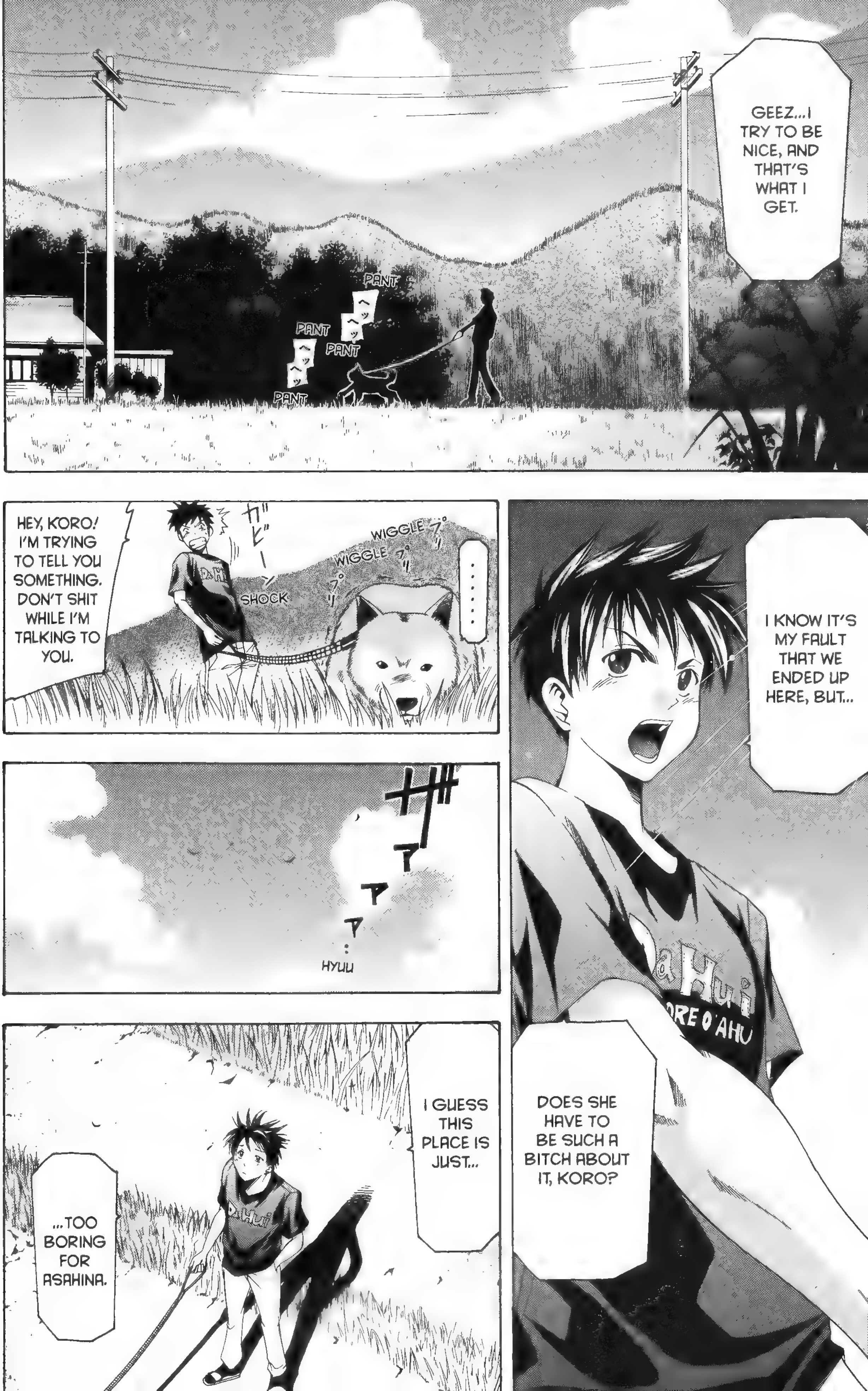

YOU'RE ALWAYS SCREWING AROUND, YAMATO.
THAT'S WHY YOU MISSED THE TRAIN!
FATHER (SELF-EMPLOYED) YOSHIO AKITSUKI
YOUR FATHER'S RIGHT, YAMATO.
YOU SHOULD'VE JUST GONE TO SCHOOL IN HIROSHIMA.
MOM (HOUSEWIFE/PART-TIME WORKER) KOTONO AKITSUKI
GIVE HIM A BREAK, KOTONO-SAN.
IT'S NICE JUST TO HAVE HIM BACK HOME.
GRANDMOTHER HATSUKO AKITSUKI
YOU MIGHT LIVE IN TOKYO, BUT YOU STILL LOOK LIKE A LOSER, YAMATO.
YUP.
LITTLE SISTER (EIGHTH GRADE) RIE AKITSUKI
LITTLE BROTHER (FIFTH GRADE) HIRAKAZU AKITSUKI
YEP, THIS IS IT...
THE LIFE I HAD FOR SIXTEEN LONG YEARS.
THAT'S WHY IT MAKES IT SEEM...
...ALL THE MORE WEIRD...

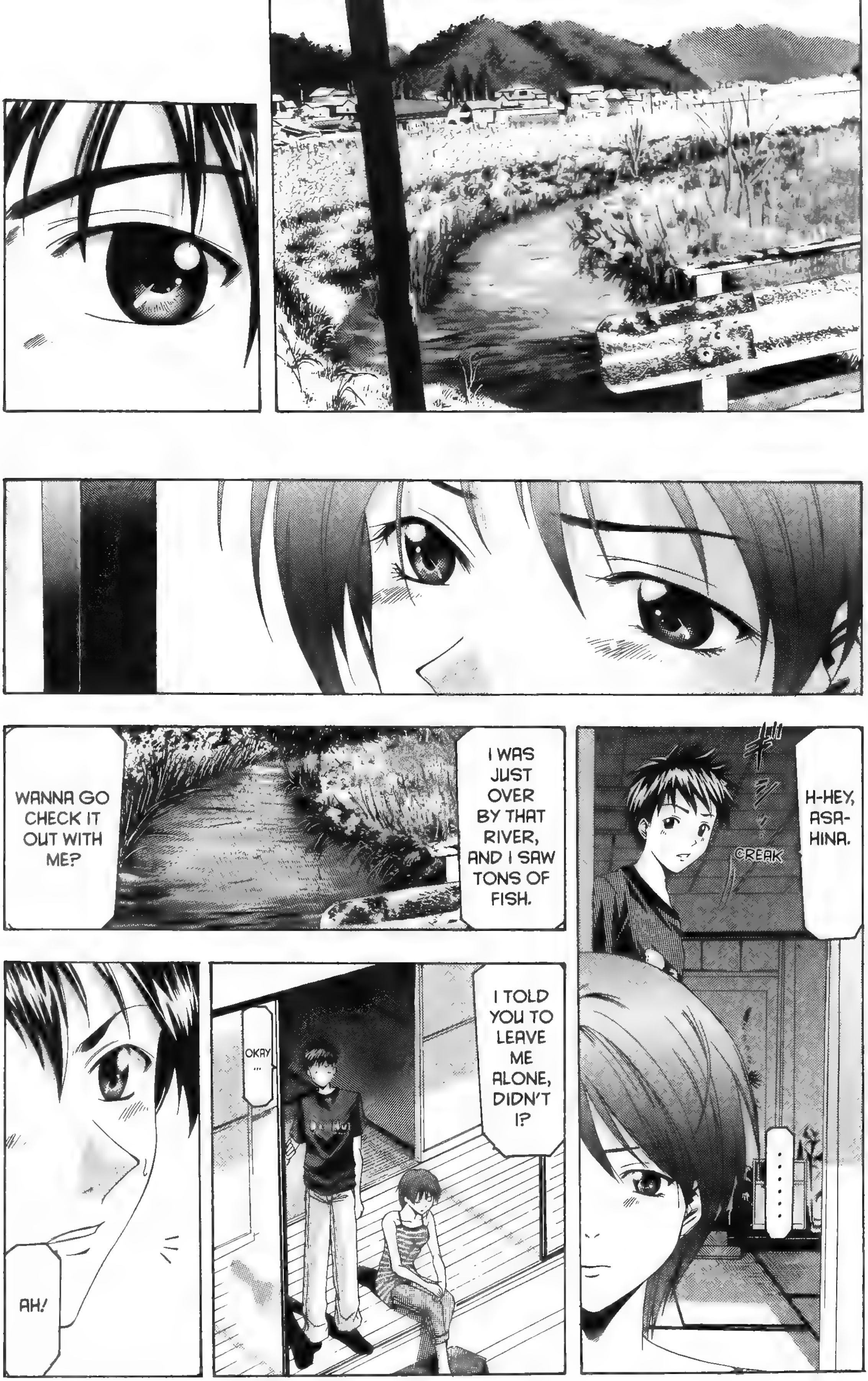

...THAT ASAHINA IS HERE.
......
HAVE SOME SEA CUCUMBER, SUZUKA-CHAN. IT'S DELICIOUS.
I'LL TRY SOME.
DON'T MAKE HER EAT THAT CRAP!
WHAT TIME ARE YOU GONNA TAKE US TO THE STATION?
IT'S A LONG DRIVE, SO WE SHOULD PROBABLY LEAVE SOON.
I'M BUSY UNTIL THIS AFTERNOON, SO...
WE'LL LEAVE AROUND FOUR, AND IF THERE'S NOT TOO MUCH TRAFFIC, WE SHOULD MAKE IT BY SIX-THIRTY.

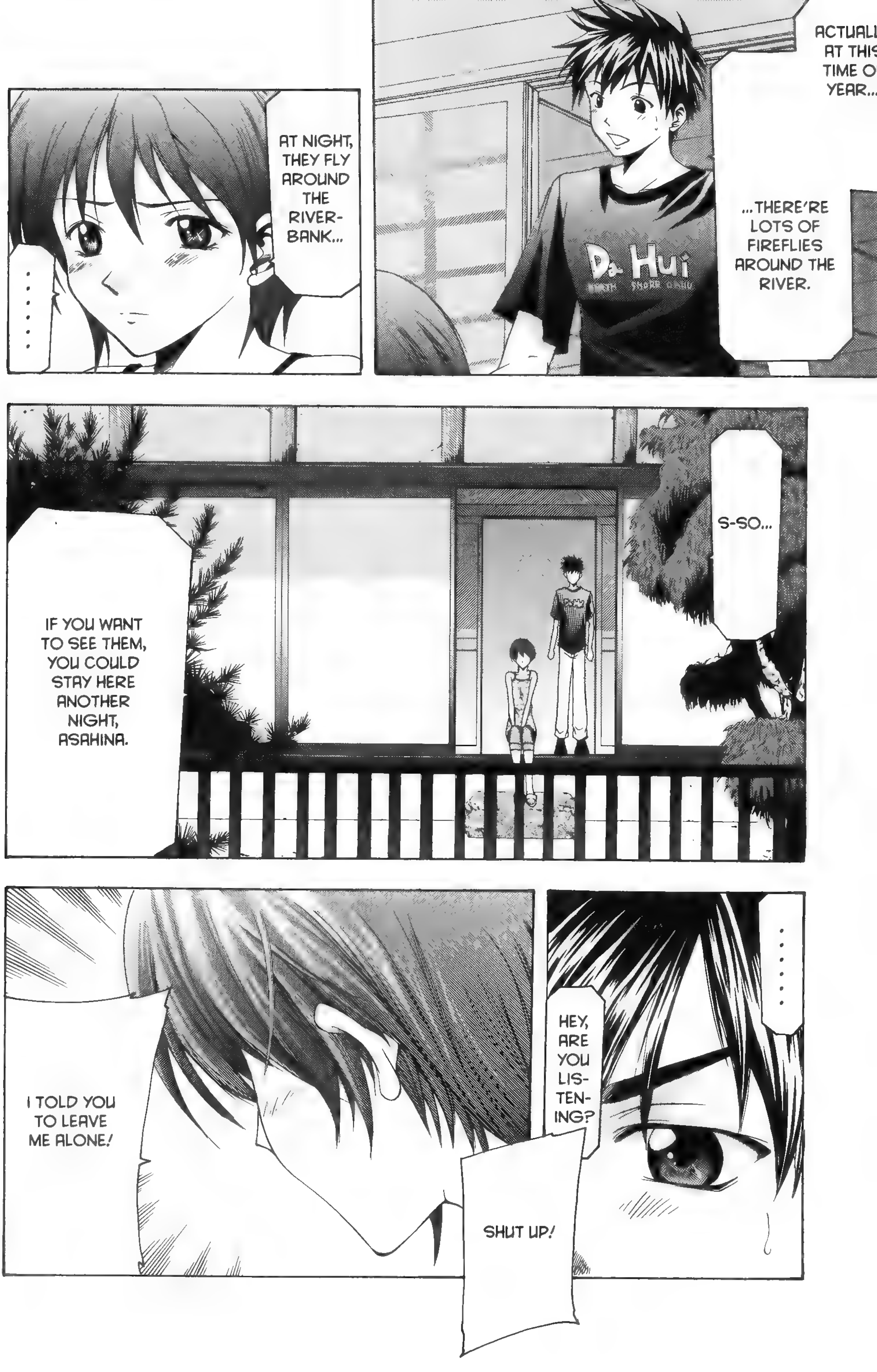

7
14
21
28
YOU'RE ALREADY GOING HOME, YAMATO?
BUT YOU JUST GOT HERE. WHY DON'T YOU STAY A WHILE?
I WOULDN'T MIND, BUT ASAHINA CAN'T.
I'M SORRY...
...TO CAUSE YOU SO MUCH TROUBLE.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. IT WAS ALL YAMATO'S FAULT.
YEAH, HE'S THE ONE WHO DROPPED THE SODA.
RIGHT, MIIKO?
SHUT UP, YOU TWO.
WELL, I'VE GOTTA BE GOING.
ガラ ガラ
SLIDE
YOU GUYS WILL JUST HAVE TO KILL SOME TIME.
OKAY.
......

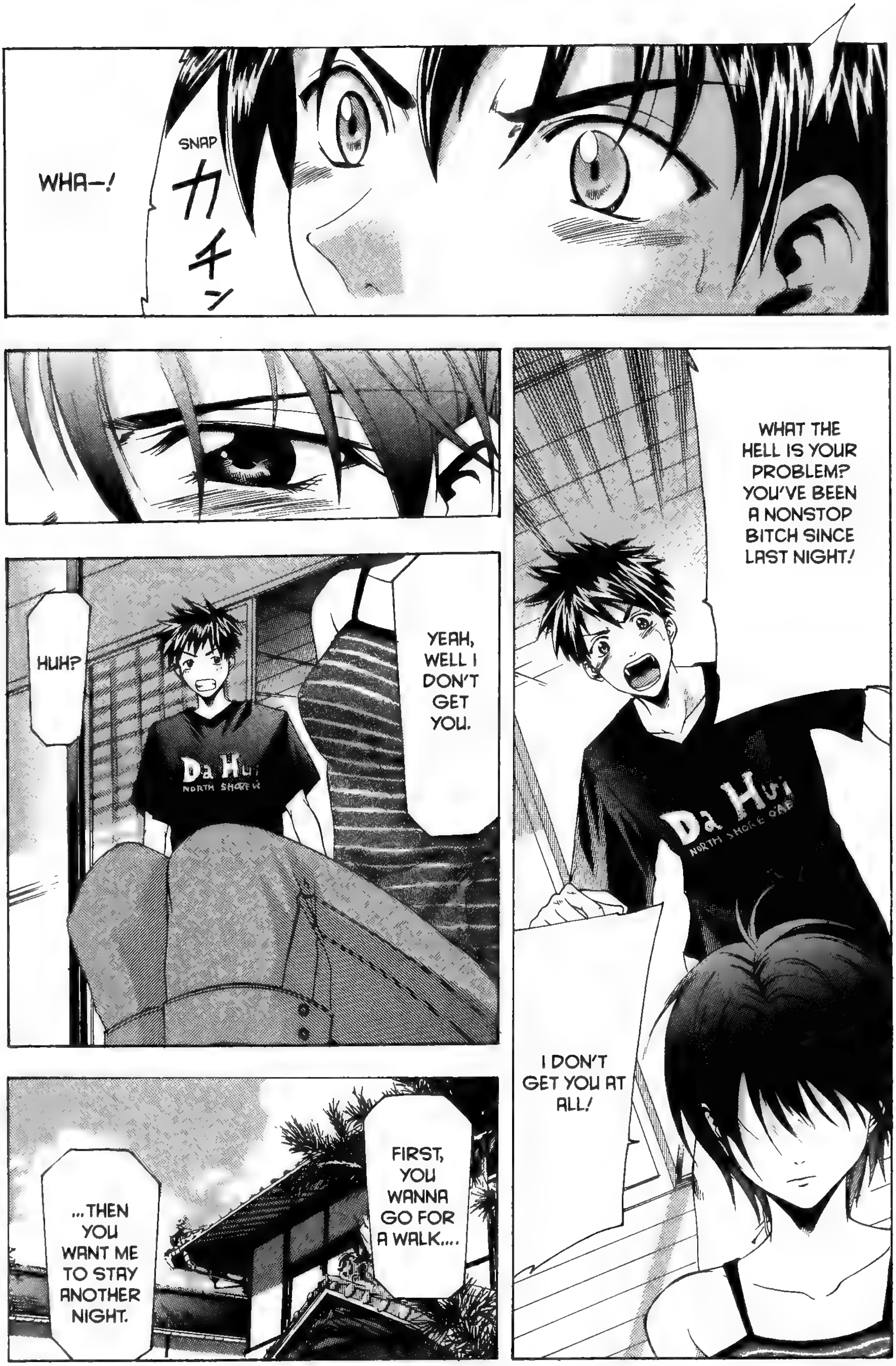

ギッ
CREAK
H-HEY...
YAM-ATO-KUN.
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
THIS IS REALLY AWK-WARD, BUT...
I CAN'T JUST IGNORE HER ALL DAY.
HEY, ASAHINA. WANT ME TO SHOW YOU AROUND A LITTLE?
......
THAT'S OKAY.
JUST LEAVE ME ALONE.
ムッ
GRR
BUT WE'VE GOT A FEW HOURS BEFORE IT'S TIME TO GO.
Da Hui

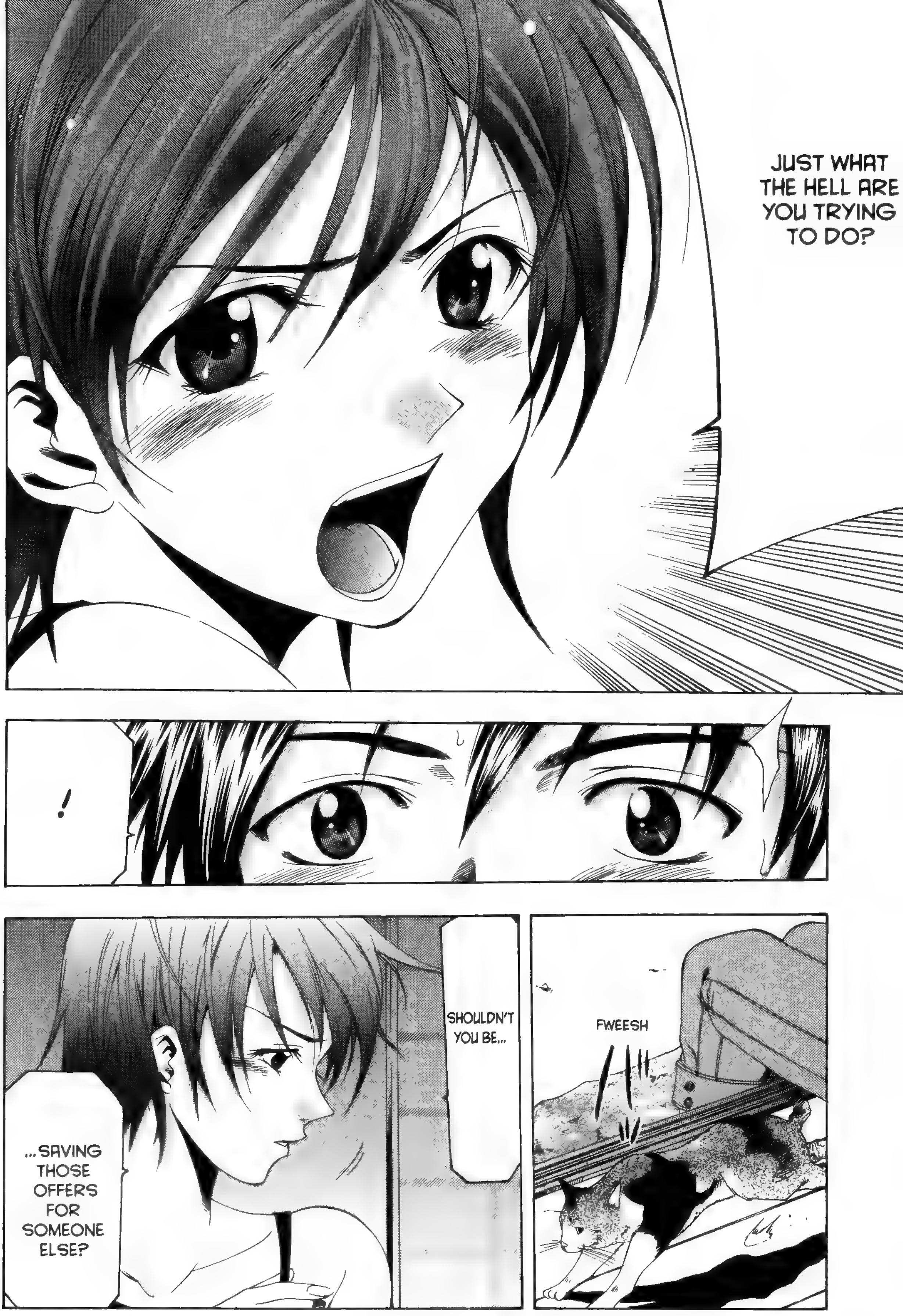

WE COULD TAKE THE DOG OUT FOR A WALK, AND—
RIE-CHAN LET ME BORROW SOME CLOTHES.
HUH?
AND SHE BOUGHT ME SOME UNDERWEAR.
WHEN WE GET BACK, I'LL HAVE TO GET SOMETHING FOR HER.
UM...
......
BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ
UH...
BUZZ
シャワ
UNLESS YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY, JUST LEAVE ME ALONE.
YEAH...
BUZZ
シャワ
BUZZ
シャワ
OKAY.
Da Hui
NORTH SHORE OAHU

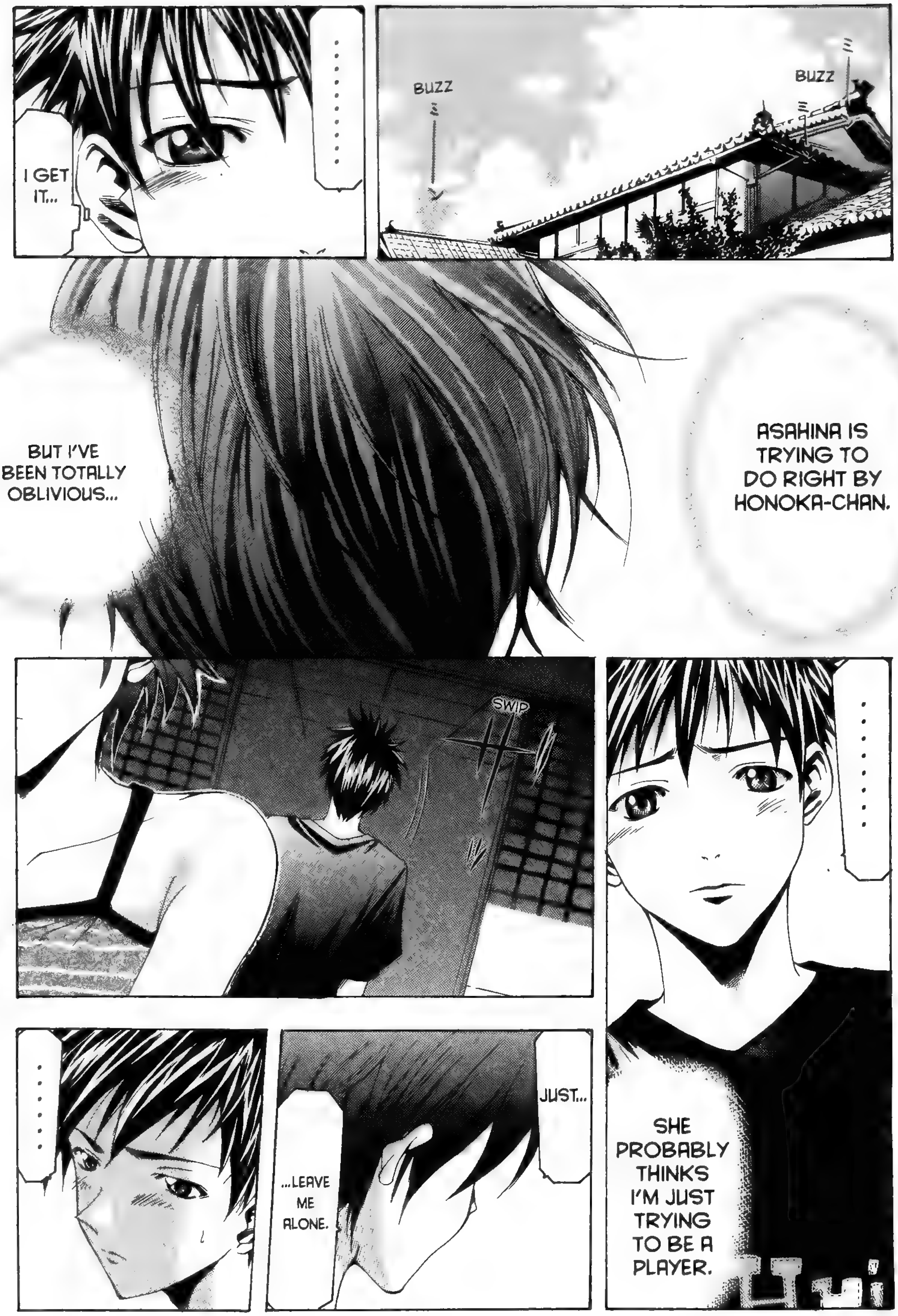

GEEZ...I TRY TO BE NICE, AND THAT'S WHAT I GET.
PANT
ヘッ
PANT
ヘッ
PANT
PANT
I KNOW IT'S MY FAULT THAT WE ENDED UP HERE, BUT...
DOES SHE HAVE TO BE SUCH A BITCH ABOUT IT, KORO?
HEY, KORO! I'M TRYING TO TELL YOU SOMETHING. DON'T SHIT WHILE I'M TALKING TO YOU.
......
SHOCK
WIGGLE
WIGGLE
HYUU
I GUESS THIS PLACE IS JUST...
...TOO BORING FOR ASAHINA.

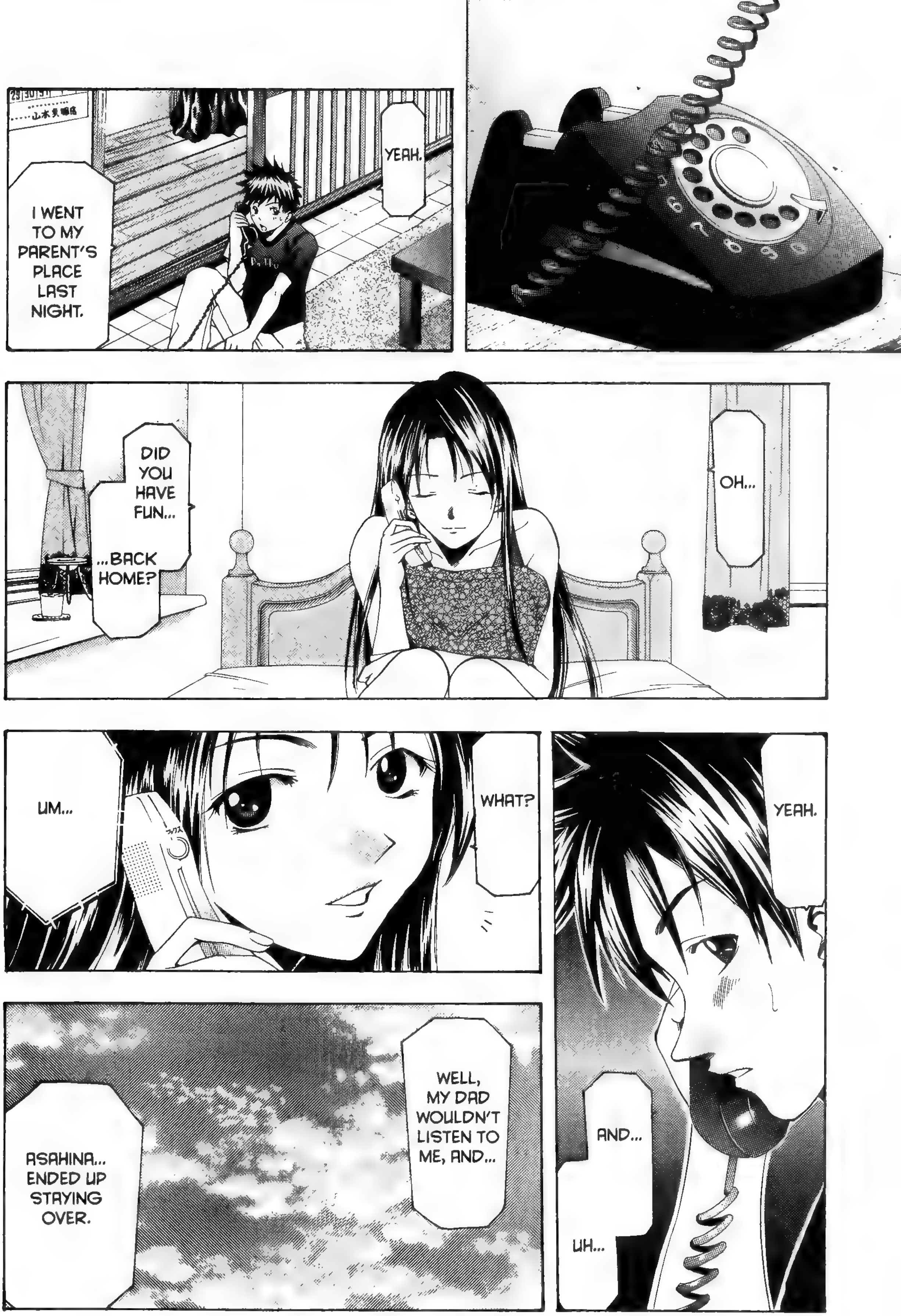

ギシッ
CREAK
H-HEY, ASAHINA.
……
I WAS JUST OVER BY THAT RIVER, AND I SAW TONS OF FISH.
WANNA GO CHECK IT OUT WITH ME?
I TOLD YOU TO LEAVE ME ALONE, DIDN'T I?
OKAY…
AH!

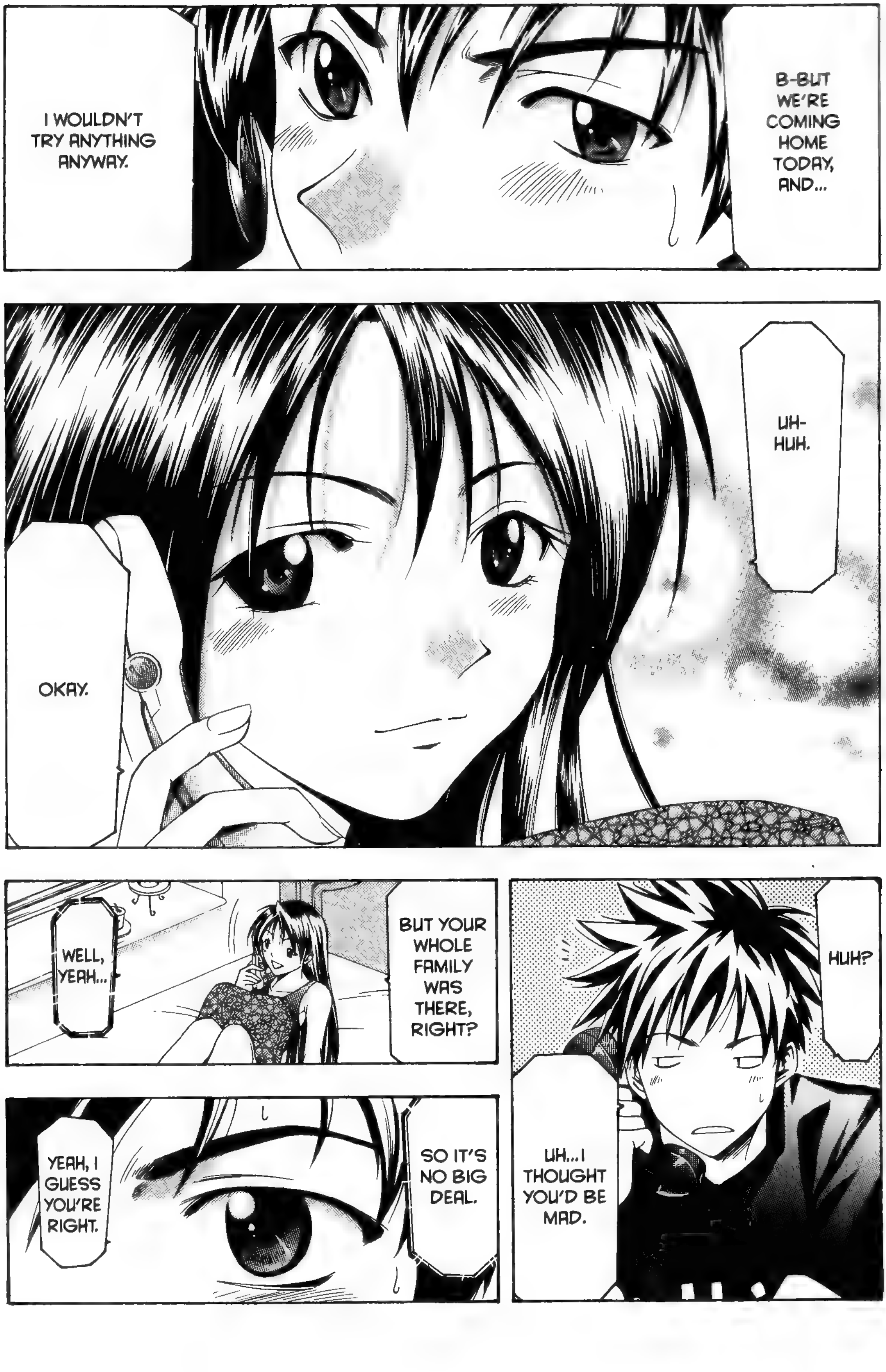

ACTUALL AT THIS TIME O YEAR...
...THERE'RE LOTS OF FIREFLIES AROUND THE RIVER.
AT NIGHT, THEY FLY AROUND THE RIVERBANK...
......
S-SO...
IF YOU WANT TO SEE THEM, YOU COULD STAY HERE ANOTHER NIGHT, ASAHINA.
......
HEY, ARE YOU LISTENING?
SHUT UP!
I TOLD YOU TO LEAVE ME ALONE!

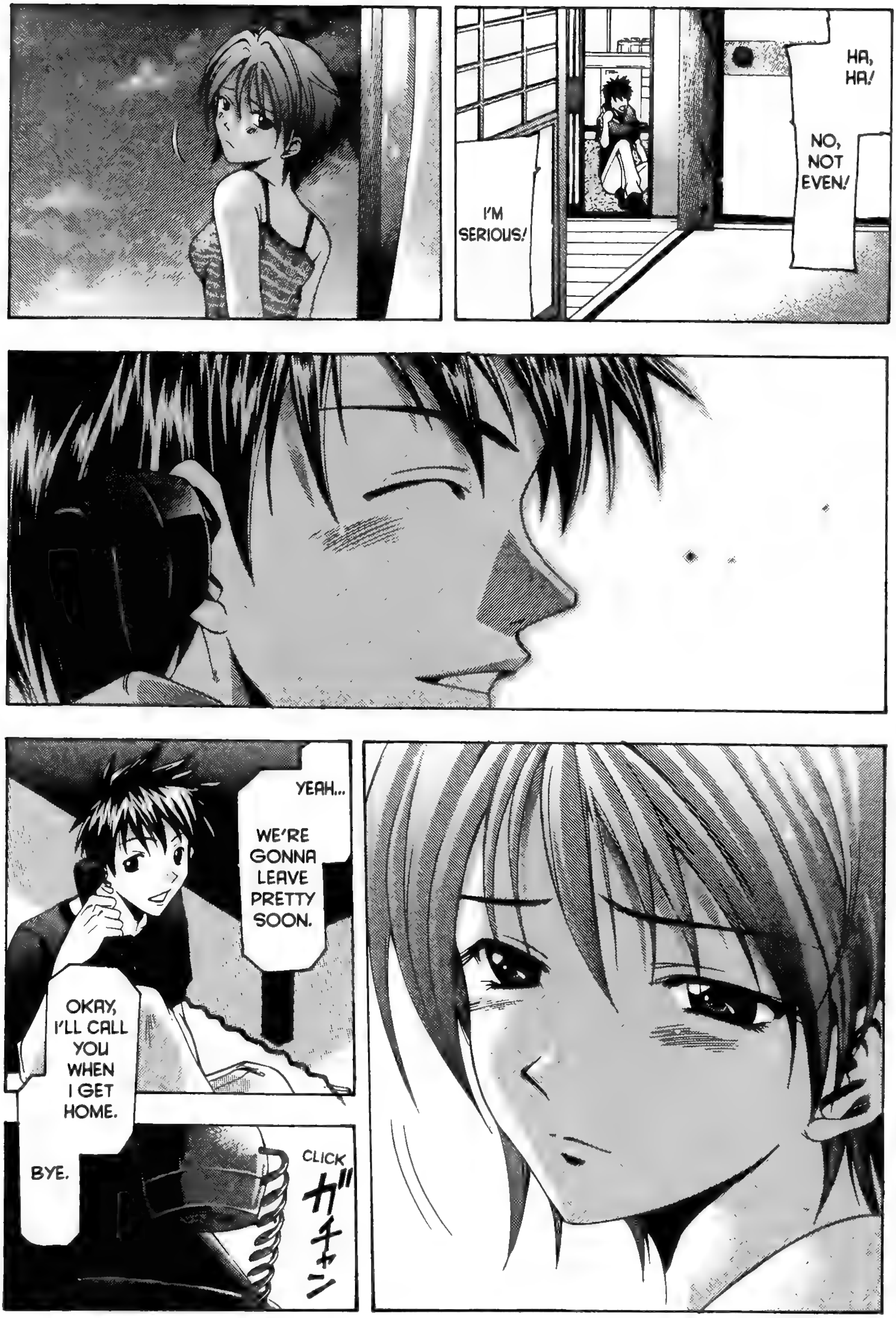

SNAP
カチン
WHA—!
WHAT THE HELL IS YOUR PROBLEM? YOU'VE BEEN A NONSTOP BITCH SINCE LAST NIGHT!
YEAH, WELL I DON'T GET YOU.
HUH?
Da Hui
NORTH SHORE
I DON'T GET YOU AT ALL!
FIRST, YOU WANNA GO FOR A WALK....
...THEN YOU WANT ME TO STAY ANOTHER NIGHT.

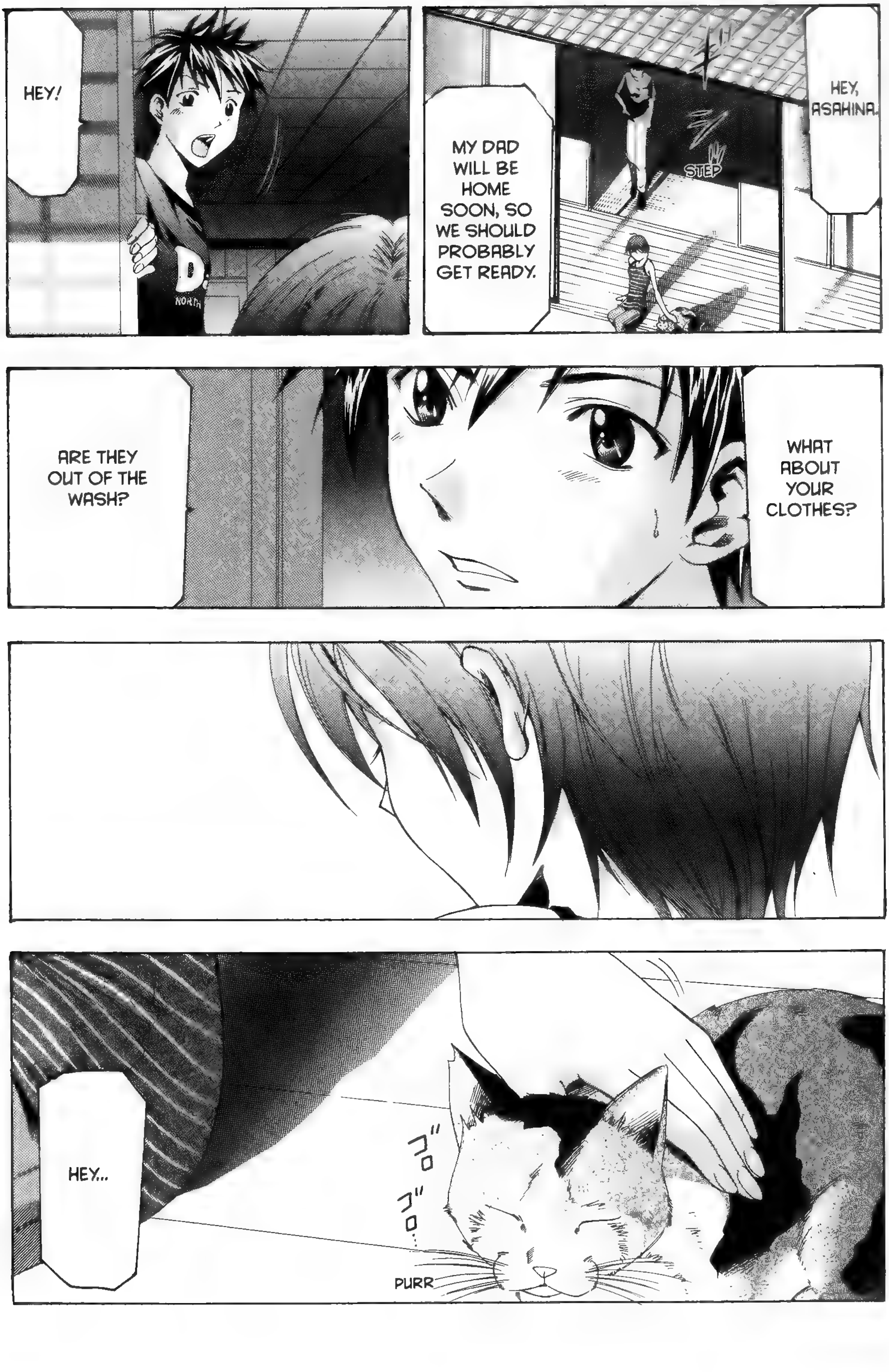

JUST WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TRYING TO DO?
!
FWEESH
SHOULDN'T YOU BE...
...SAVING THOSE OFFERS FOR SOMEONE ELSE?

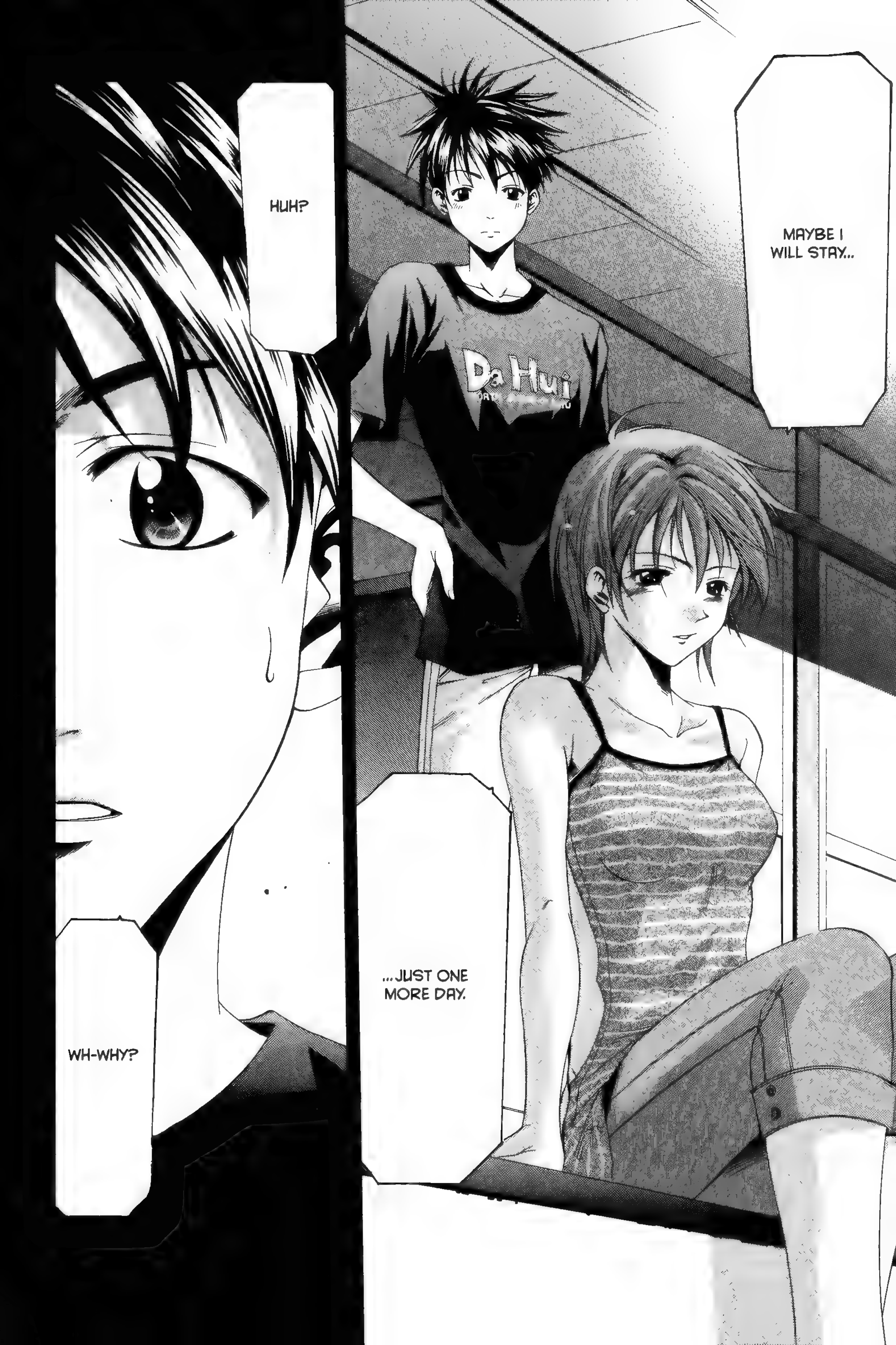

BUZZ
BUZZ
....
I GET IT...
ASAHINA IS TRYING TO DO RIGHT BY HONOKA-CHAN.
BUT I'VE BEEN TOTALLY OBLIVIOUS...
....
SHE PROBABLY THINKS I'M JUST TRYING TO BE A PLAYER.
Yui
SWIP
JUST...
...LEAVE ME ALONE.
......

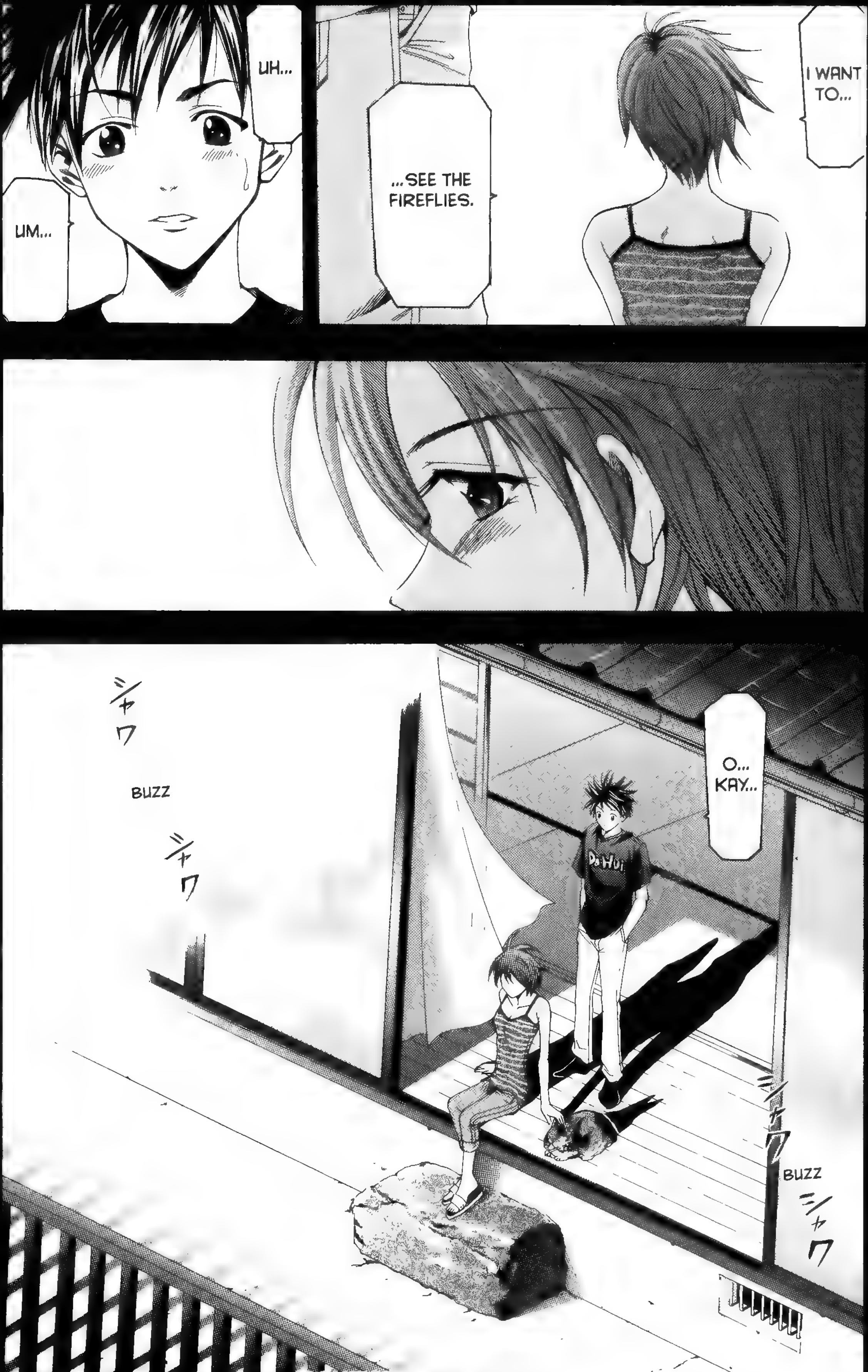

YEAH.
I WENT TO MY PARENT'S PLACE LAST NIGHT.
OH...
DID YOU HAVE FUN...
...BACK HOME?
YEAH.
WHAT?
UM...
AND...
UH...
WELL, MY DAD WOULDN'T LISTEN TO ME, AND...
ASAHINA... ENDED UP STAYING OVER.


B-BUT WE'RE COMING HOME TODAY, AND...
I WOULDN'T TRY ANYTHING ANYWAY.
UH-HUH.
OKAY.
HUH?
UH...I THOUGHT YOU'D BE MAD.
BUT YOUR WHOLE FAMILY WAS THERE, RIGHT?
WELL, YEAH...
SO IT'S NO BIG DEAL.
YEAH, I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.


HA, HA!
NO, NOT EVEN!
I'M SERIOUS!
YEAH...
WE'RE GONNA LEAVE PRETTY SOON.
OKAY, I'LL CALL YOU WHEN I GET HOME.
BYE.
CLICK
ガチャン


HEY, ASAHINA.
MY DAD WILL BE HOME SOON, SO WE SHOULD PROBABLY GET READY.
STEP
HEY!
WHAT ABOUT YOUR CLOTHES?
ARE THEY OUT OF THE WASH?
ゴロ ゴロ…
PURR
HEY...


MAYBE I WILL STAY...
Da Hui
...JUST ONE MORE DAY.
HUH?
WH-WHY?


I WANT TO...
...SEE THE FIREFLIES.
UH...
UM...
O... KAY...
シャワ
BUZZ
シャワ
シャワ
BUZZ
シャワ

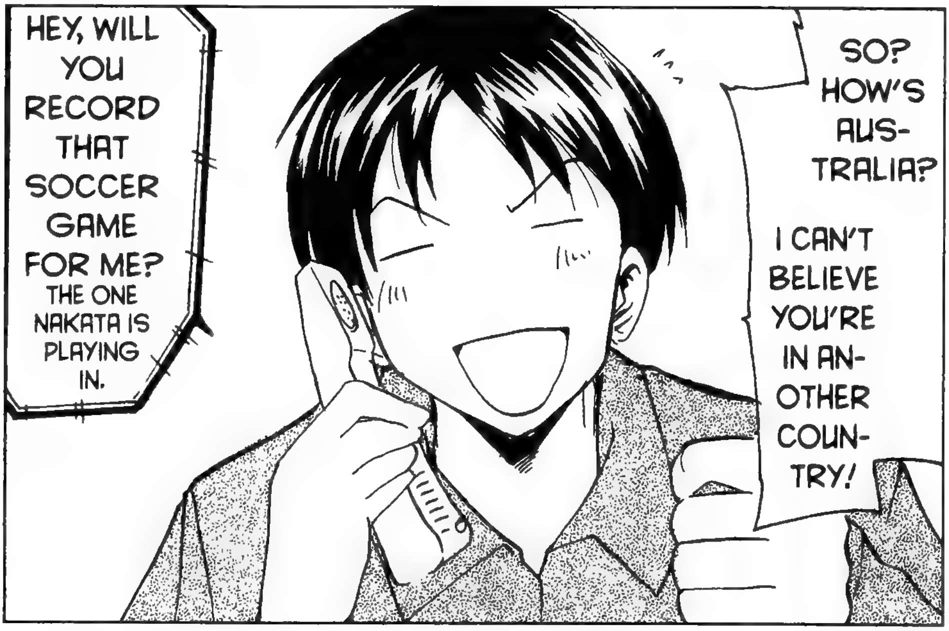
CONTINUED IN VOLUME 6

Translation Notes

Japanese is a tricky language for most Westerners, and translation is often more an art than a science. For your edification and reading pleasure, here are notes on some of the places where we could have gone in a different direction or where a Japanese cultural reference is used.

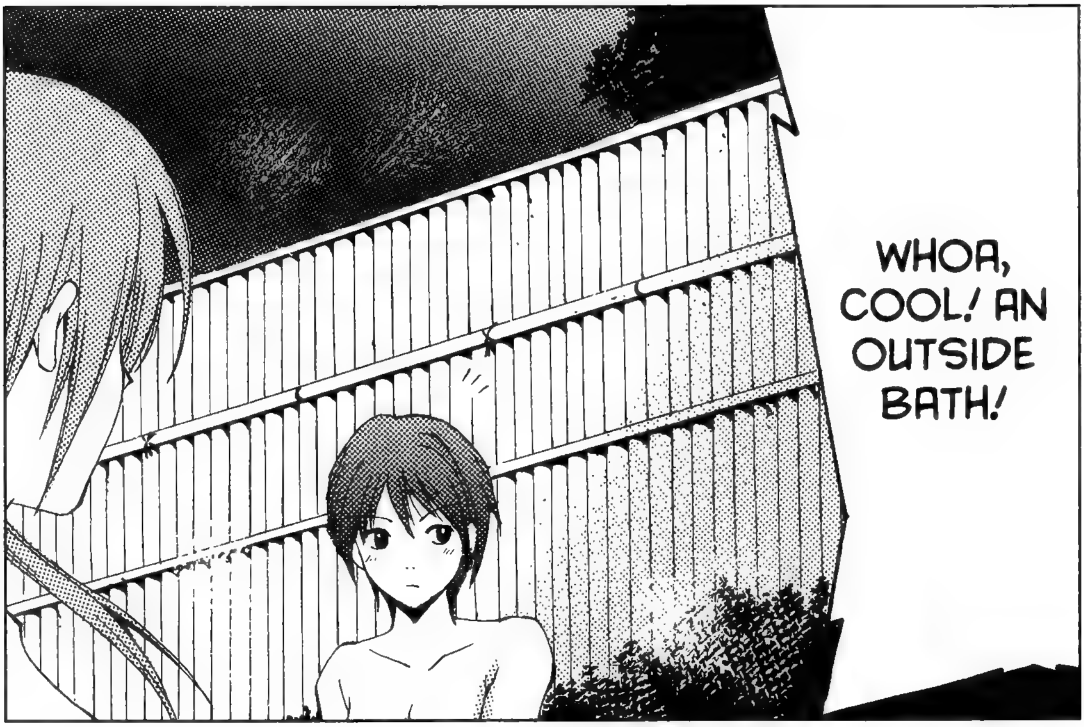
Nakata, page 72

Hidetoshi Nakata is a famous Japanese soccer player who recently shocked the soccer world when he retired at age twenty-nine. He has played for both Japanese and Italian teams.


SO? HOW'S AUSTRALIA?
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE IN ANOTHER COUNTRY!
HEY, WILL YOU RECORD THAT SOCCER GAME FOR ME? THE ONE NAKATA IS PLAYING IN.

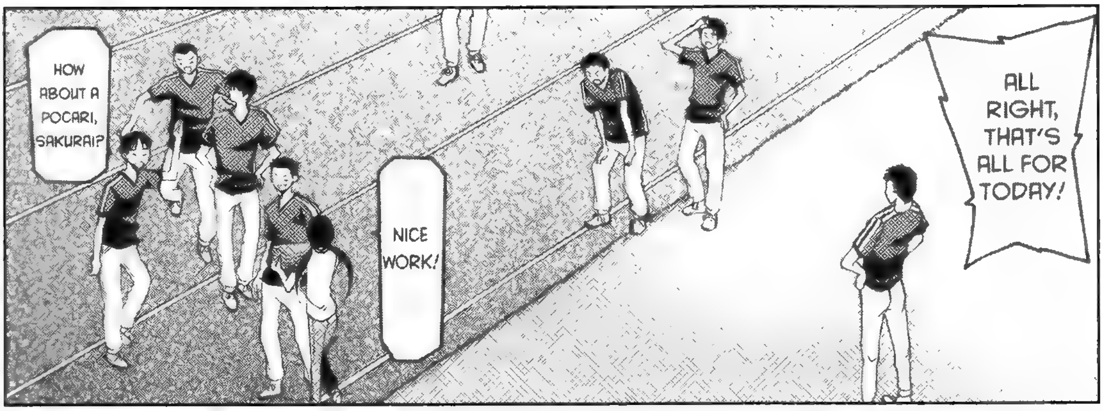
An outside bath!, page 99

Japanese inns often have communal baths. The baths are generally separated into male and female sections by a bamboo fence or other structure.


WHOA, COOL! AN OUTSIDE BATH!

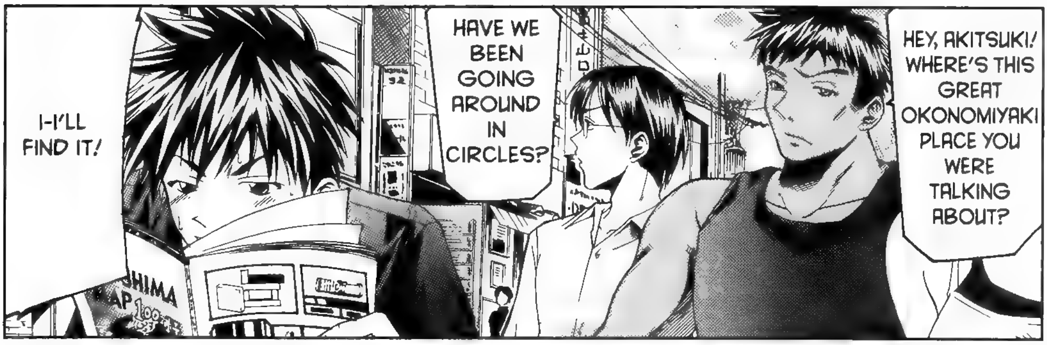
Pocari, page 115

Pocari Sweat is a popular Japanese sports drink.

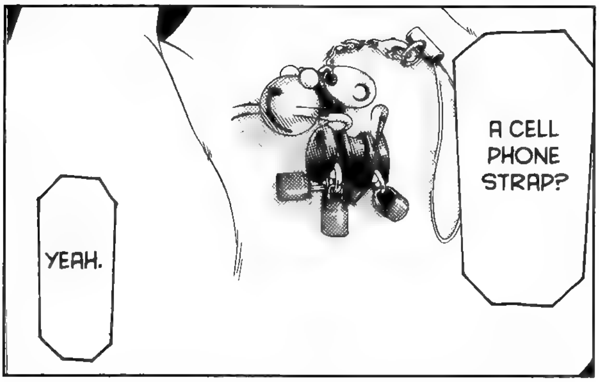

ALL RIGHT, THAT'S ALL FOR TODAY!
NICE WORK!
HOW ABOUT A POCARI, SAKURAI?

Okonomiyaki, page 135

Hiroshima is famous for *okonomiyaki*—a Japanese-style pancake. It's made of batter and a mixture of meat, vegetables, and egg. Hiroshima-style *okonomiyaki* generally includes noodles as well.


HEY, AKITSUKI! WHERE'S THIS GREAT OKONOMIYAKI PLACE YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT?
HAVE WE BEEN GOING AROUND IN CIRCLES?
I-I'LL FIND IT!

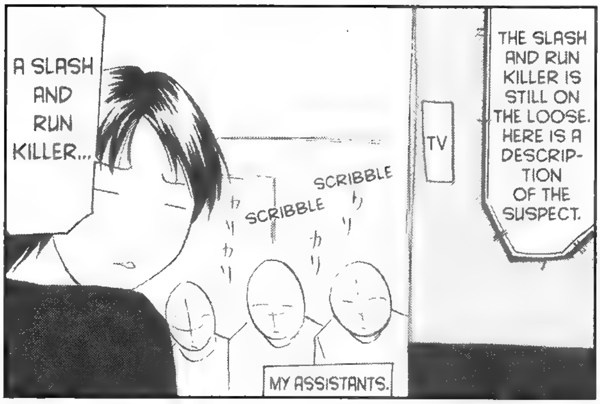
Cell phone strap, page 137


A CELL PHONE STRAP?
YEAH.

Cell phone straps are little straps, often with cute characters tied onto them, that people attach to their cell phones.

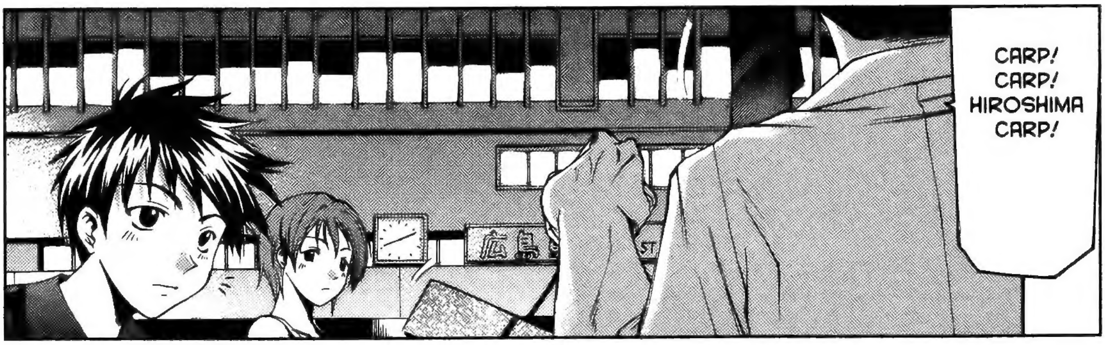
Slash and run killer, page 152

Slash and run killings, or *toorima,* are a common crime phenomenon in Japan. In a slash and run, the perpetrator picks out a random target on the street, casually passes by, stabs them, and then flees the scene.


THE SLASH AND RUN KILLER IS STILL ON THE LOOSE. HERE IS A DESCRIPTION OF THE SUSPECT.
TV
SCRIBBLE
SCRIBBLE
A SLASH AND RUN KILLER...
MY ASSISTANTS.

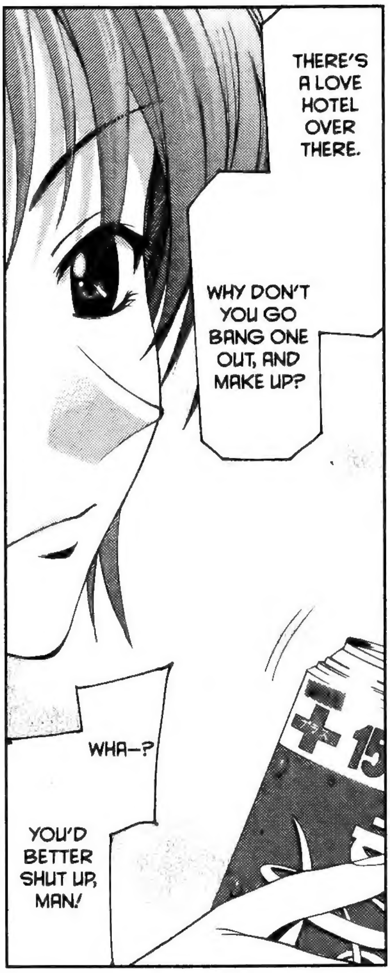
Hiroshima Carp, page 158

The Hiroshima Carp are a baseball team. This inebriated fellow is singing the Carp's theme song.


CARP! CARP! HIROSHIMA CARP!
広島

Love hotel, page 159

Love hotels are specifically designed for couples seeking privacy. They can be rented by the night or, during the daytime, by the hour.


THERE'S A LOVE HOTEL OVER THERE.
WHY DON'T YOU GO BANG ONE OUT, AND MAKE UP?
WHA-?
YOU'D BETTER SHUT UP, MAN!

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